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The Myth of Monolithic Communism by Murray N. Rothbard
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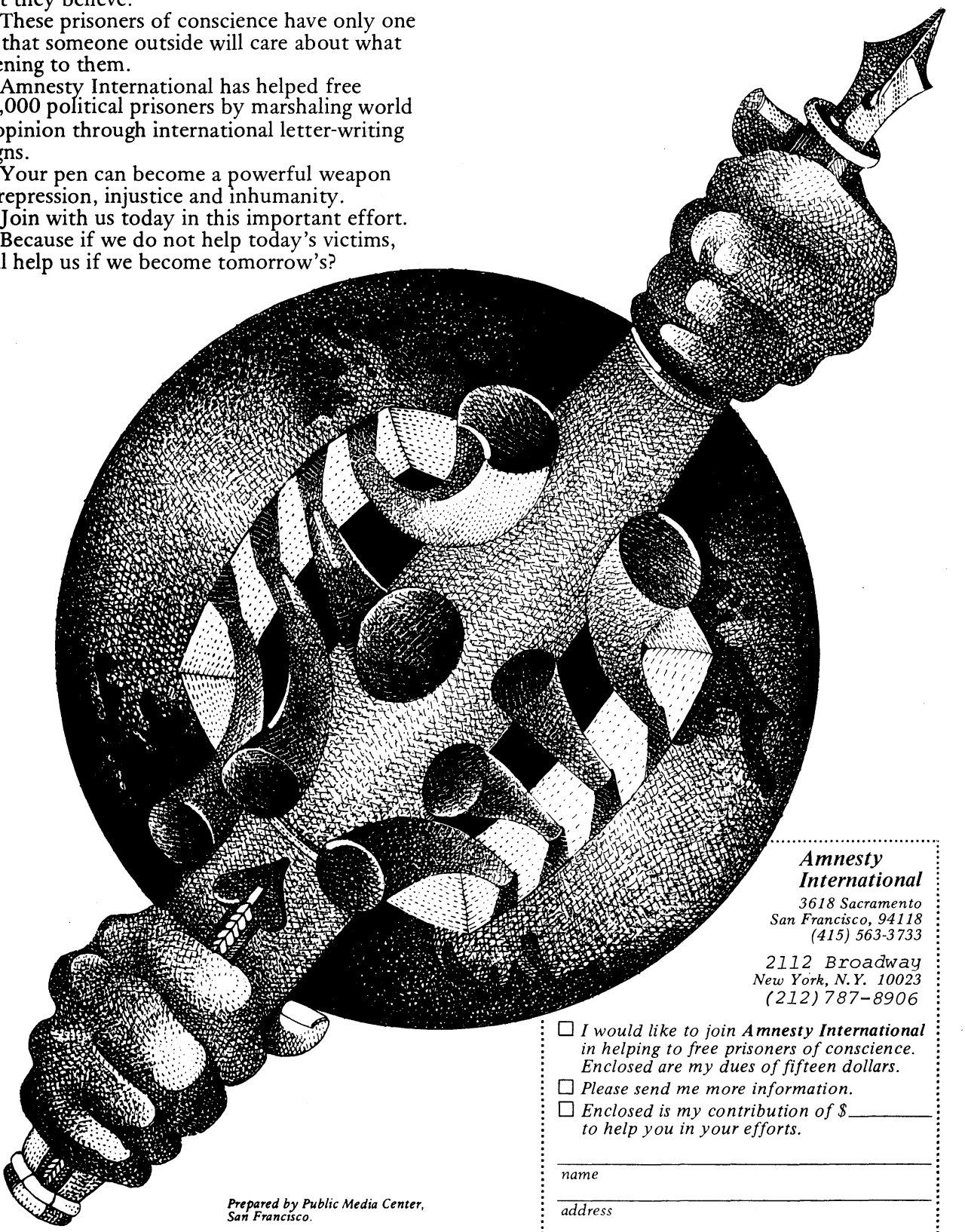

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THE LIBERTARIAN REVIEW

February 1979
Volume 8, No. 1

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THE LIBERTARIAN EDITORIALS

Budget time at the white house

This budget for fiscal year 1980 is lean and austere.

—Carter's Budget Message to Congress

Had a pig waddled down Pennsylvania Avenue at high noon that day it too would have been called "lean and austere", and commended to the American people as an example of thrift in action.

—Alexander Cockburn, "Fat Is Beautiful"; Village Voice,

CAN ANYONE doubt it? That "lean and austere" Federal budget the Big Peanut is proposing dresses out at about five hundred thirty-one billion, six hundred million dollars. Fifteen years ago, according to columnist James Reston, President Lyndon Baines Johnson balked at submitting the first peacetime budget larger than $100 billion—on the grounds that (in Reston's words) "a $100 billion budget was a dangerous political symbol." Now Carter is breaking the half-trillion dollar barrier, and expecting us to hail him as a tight-fisted guardian of the public purse! "Austere", indeed! Really, it's bad enough that our rulers bleed us white; do they have to defile our language as well?

In fiscal 1979, which ends on September 30, the Federal government will spend $493.4 billion. Carter means to spend $531.6 billion in 1980, an increase of 7.7%. But isn't that really a cut in spending, when the budget is measured in "real", uninflated dollars? No, it is not. That figure assumes that prices, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, will rise by only 7.4% from December 1978 to December 1979, and by just 6.3% the year after that. For all his blather about austerity, then, Carter hasn't got the guts to call for a real cut in spending. Or for a real cut in taxes, for that matter; government "revenues", as they are called, will rise to $502.6 billion from $456 billion this year, a 10.3% increase. Thus does Carter vindicate the sainted Mr. Bruce Bartlett, who asked LR's readers last November "Who cares about a balanced budget?" Who indeed cares if Carter actually cuts the budget deficit to "only" $29 billion, if this is how he means to do it?

Some readers may have been deluded by the anguished cries of the liberals (e.g. Teddy Kennedy, who ranted that the budget is brutal to the "poor, the black, the sick, the young, the cities and the unemployed"—and the taxpayer, but Teddy forgot to mention him) into thinking that Carter's budget is indeed an assault on the welfare state. Flapdoodle. The real cause of their anguish is that the welfare state isn't growing as fast as they'd like. Such measures as cutting off the $255 Social Security "death benefit"—widely bewailed as grinding the faces of the poor—amount to one-half of 1% of the total benefits paid out by Social Security; benefits that Carter would *increase* 13%. The two major Federal welfare programs, Aid to Families With Dependent Children and Supplemental Security Income, will have their appropriations hiked 6% and 8% respectively. Far from cramping the welfare state's style, this "lean" budget would increase HEW's spending by 9%, and total spending, exclusive of the defense budget, by 7.1%. Such austerity.

The defense budget, of course, is even less "austere". With an increase of 10% in the Pentagon's spending—which is a 3.1% boost even after inflation—who can even pretend that Carter's budget is a threat to the American warfare state? Why, the conservatives, that's who (and, we'll venture to predict, not a few self-described "libertarians".) Indeed, the *Wall Street Journal*—that stalwart foe of "Big Government"—wailed that "the claim of 3% growth can be made only because of the shortfall in the current year's spending"; which was a whole $3.3 billion less than planned. Well the *Journal* happens to be understating the case; according to *Business Week* (January 29, 1979), the Pentagon is finally starting to spend not $3.3 billion, but *$75 billion* left over from past years! And, according to Representative Elizabeth Holtzman (D-NY) a big chunk of that ($21 billion by the end of 1979) consists of "unobligated balances"; money that nobody could find a way to squander. So why should anybody tremble that the hordes of Muscovy might be outspending us?

Then there are the items that nobody, liberal or conservative, will touch; from the $57 billion to service the national debt to the $100,000 to repaint the White House. Only libertarians have the radicalism the case requires; to abolish both welfare and the American Empire, to repudiate the National debt and burn the White House—yea, the entire sinful city of Washington—to the ground and plow the ashes with SALT. Everybody else either foams for greater state coercion on behalf of *their* sacred cow, or they settle for 99.94% as much coercion for *everybody's* sacred cow, and call that "lean and austere"—like the gasbag who presently defiles the White House. *Ecrasez l'infame!*

—BB

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Crossing the border

I FIRST MET THE MAN I'll call Rinaldo a little more than a year ago, just before he was deported for the second time. Rinaldo had been pulled over by the Los Angeles police for a run-of-the-mill traffic violation. He'd been hauled in when the arresting officers learned his car had several dozen unpaid parking tickets on it. And once he was at police headquarters, downtown, it didn't take long to establish that Rinaldo was an illegal "alien." From there it was 24 hours in the L.A. city slammer, followed by another 48 or 72 in a work camp in the nearby Santa Clarita Valley, then a bus ride back to Mexico.

And all because Rinaldo was so irresponsible about his driving and his parking tickets. It was ironic, because otherwise Rinaldo didn't have an irresponsible bone in his body. He originally came north to the United States from his father's poor farm in northern Mexico, because he wanted to do better for himself in life than live in the desert and eat cactus. The farm was big enough to support Rinaldo's father and his younger brother Pancho. But it wasn't big enough to support him too. And unemployment in Mexican cities averages 50 percent of the work force.

So Rinaldo came north and worked where he could, doing whatever work was wanted, mostly working as a carpenter for small building contractors. He made enough to rent an apartment for himself and his wife Luisa, enough to bring his father and brother up from Mexico each winter for three years running, and enough to buy a car. The problems began when he began driving the car.

The first time he was deported, Rinaldo got back by paying $250 to a guide who makes his living leading illegal aliens into the United States through the mountains of Southern California. They have to go without food for three days, and they get pretty dirty, but they don't have any trouble from the border patrol. The terrain's too rough.

The second time he was deported, Rinaldo got back the same way, by paying the guide another $250. When you think about the improvement living in this country has meant in Rinaldo's life, it's not difficult to understand why he keeps coming back, even at so high a price.

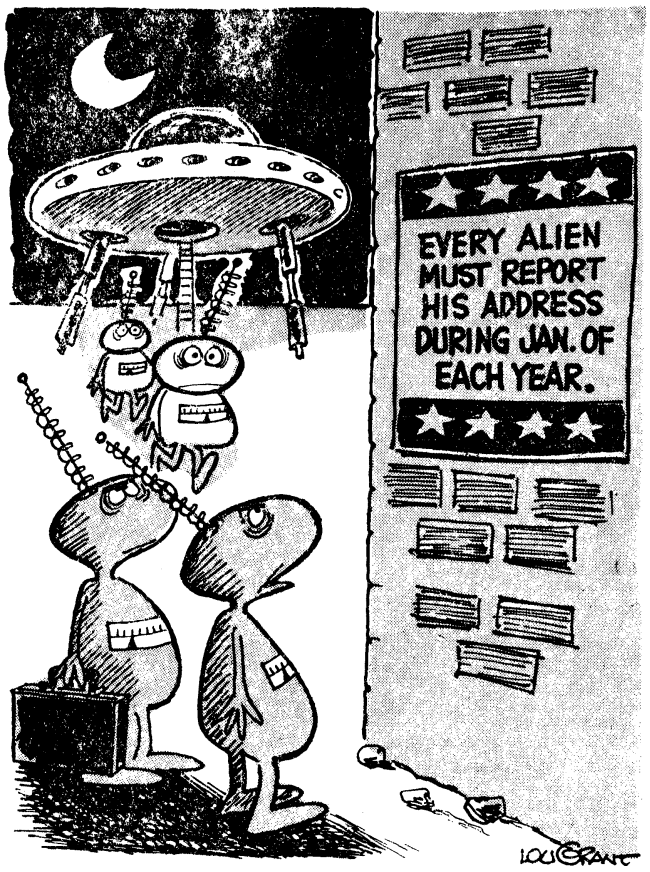
The most reliable current estimates are that more than seven and a half million—probably around ten million—Latin Americans like Rinaldo are now living illegally in the United States. Contrary to popular myth, they pay more in taxes every year than they collect in services from government at all levels, and they work primarily at jobs American citizens refuse to consider: washing cars, cleaning schools and office buildings, washing dishes, keeping other people's houses. Every American taxpayer could save himself a goodly chunk of money and enjoy an improvement in his standard of living if the Immigration and Naturalization Service were abolished tomorrow, and the borders were opened to anyone who wanted to make his home in this country.

Yet the spending goes on. And the spenders have been meeting with scant argument in recent months when they've proposed that the flow of money be increased. Early in December, INS Commissioner Leonel Castillo asked Congress for new legislation imposing penalties on employers who knowingly hire illegals—and it's a rare thing indeed when new penalties don't create a need for new enforcers and new bureaucratic departments and new equipment and new salaries and new payrolls and new budgets. More directly to the point was Castillo's proposal a few days later that the INS dispose of two or three million dollars by constructing a couple of six-mile fences along the border, each fence to be 12 feet high on a concrete foundation sunk two feet into the ground to discourage tunnelling. Climbers would be discouraged by a chain link section designed to sway, and by razor-sharp points along the fence's top.

And Castillo isn't the only politician asking for more money to close off immigration from the south. The report of the House Select Committee on Population, released just before Christmas, recommends that the U.S. launch a program of "major economic aid" to Mexico, "to reduce the economic disparity" between the two countries. The panel sees this "disparity" as "a major reason Mexicans come here,"—and so proposes, in effect, to keep them out by having the wealth they're coming after delivered to them before they leave to come after it.

Chances are now good, of course, that the Mexican economy will perk up without such aid, because of the newly discovered oil reserves which may make Mexico a bigger—and richer—oil producer than Saudi Arabia by the 1980s. A Mexican oil boom could make a dramatic dent in the Mexican unemployment problem and make it just as attractive for Mexicans to stay at home as to come to the U.S. Now, they can earn ten times what they can earn at home, by coming to the U.S. and accepting even "menial" jobs.

But even if the oil boom comes sooner than expected, before our "representatives" in Washington can vote to bribe the Mexicans to stay in their own country, it will remain significant that such a ludicrous idea was proposed with no apparent ironic or satirical intent. What the



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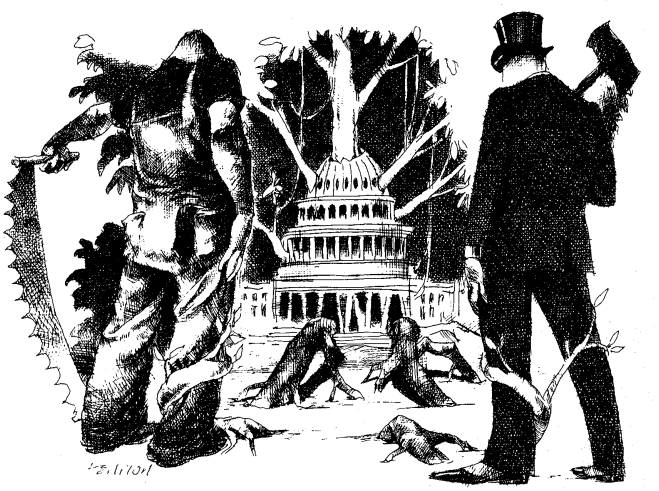
proposal signifies is nothing less than the real motive behind the move to close down the border—and, for that matter, the reason behind the use of the absurd word "alien" to describe any Spanish speaking North American who has travelled north of the Rio Grande river or the city of Tijuana. That motive is not economic, despite the so-often-repeated arguments about how the evil illegals take jobs and welfare payments from hardworking U.S. citizens. If money *were* the motive for trying to keep the illegals out, there would surely be a groundswell of angry reaction to any proposal that would *pay* them to stay out! No: the illegals are unwanted, and are thought of and treated as "aliens" because, with their dark skins, their definite, well-established culture, and their "foreign" language, they greatly excite the ever-primed-and-ready American capacity for ethnic bigotry. They are hated and feared because they are different.

Yet, ironically enough, they are not aliens in any realistic sense of that word, and their language and culture are not foreign. They and their ancestors have been living and working and travelling in Northern Mexico and the Southwestern United States for centuries. Until the U.S. annexed from Mexico—by conquest—the area we now know as West Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, it was all one country. As Carey McWilliams puts it in a recent essay in *Politics Today*,

> There are no geographic barriers between the United States and Mexico; the land is all of a piece, the border a line on a map. In an arid environment, a river that is as easily forded at certain seasons and places as the Rio Grande is doesn't separate peoples; it draws them together. From Brownsville to El Paso, the twin cities and towns along the river are often linked by one or more bridges. Westward from El Paso to San Diego, similar twin cities and towns have grown together . . . the Border Patrol did not even exist until 1924. Over the years, generations of the Spanish-speaking—the total would run into the millions—have moved back and forth across the border with little rigamarole or interference.

According to the last census, 24 percent of the people of Los Angeles—this country's third largest city—were Hispanic. It is projected that the next census will raise that proportion to 33 percent. Among the hundreds of thousands of people represented by these statistics are thousands who have lived in Los Angeles since birth, speaking Spanish daily, listening to Spanish radio stations, watching Spanish TV stations, reading Spanish-language newspapers, practicing the culture their ancestors have practiced in the same city, in the same country, for generations. Are these people speaking a "foreign" language, practicing a "foreign" culture? When they are visited by their cousins who live a hundred miles away, are they being visited by "aliens"?

A few months after my friend Rinaldo came back from his second deportation, he got pulled over for suspicion of drunken driving and got deported again. This time when he sneaked back in, the guide decided not to charge him for the trip through the mountains. Apparently he figured enough was enough. We here at Libertarian Review wonder when the American people are going to decide the same thing. —JR



Free market conservation

The land mass we now call Alaska was once a part of Russia. And if one were whimsical, one might say that this fact explains an otherwise curious similarity between the political economy of the two places. In the Soviet Union, about 95% of the land is publicly owned. In Alaska, about 99.75% of the land is publicly owned. In the Soviet Union, about 95% of the food in the country is produced on the 5% of the land which is privately owned. Government owned land is either unproductive or grossly inefficient. In Alaska, *all* the food produced in the state is produced on the .25% of the land which is privately owned. The government owned land is unproductive.

Now of course, in the Soviet Union, most of the land is publicly owned because the communist ideology of that nation's rulers demands that all land and all wealth be publicly owned; while in the state of Alaska, most of the land is publicly owned because *this* nation's rulers have decided—with a good deal of support from so-called environmentalist groups—that it is a duty of government not only to protect its citizens from each other and from themselves, but also to protect Mother Nature from its citizens.

And in the past few months, the federal government has been fulfilling this "duty" with a vengeance. In November, Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus "withdrew from development" (seized) 54-million acres of Alaska land. And three weeks later, in early December, President Carter designated (commandeered) another 56-million acres as a "national monument". By the dawn of the new year, the federal government had confiscated 170,000 square miles of land in Alaska—an area larger than the entire state of California.

And the feds aren't through yet. Early in January, Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland asked Congress to designate another 15-million acres (most, but not all, of it in Alaska) as federally protected wilderness areas.

All this federal landholding is not without consequences, of course: the designation of an area as a federally protected wilderness area, or as a national park or monument for that matter, means closing it off to timbering, hard-rock mining, oil and gas exploration, even cattle grazing. And when this happens in a state like Alaska, in which only one million acres of land are now in private hands (while another 335 million are in federal hands and the other 39 million acres belong to the state, the Eskimos and the Indians), it means natural resources remain undeveloped, and economic growth is stymied.

The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized recently that the Carter administration bureaucrats responsible for the massive land seizures of the

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past few months are practicing a kind of domestic imperialism. "It is fashionable," the paper wrote,

> to attribute the lack of economic development in the Third World to decisions made from afar about its natural resources. The colonial administrators departed, the story goes, only to be replaced by neocolonialists in London, Bonn, Paris and Washington, who locked up Third World resources in uses that kept the emerging nation-states poor. This explanation of Third World poverty still inspires a great deal of outrage against the U.S. among university people and provides excuses for socialist failures in the Third World.
>
> We are puzzled why this doctrine is so narrowly applied. It seems to us that it is at least as good an explanation for the growing lack of development in Alaska and the western states.

And this colonialism has consequences far beyond the confines of the western states being colonially administered. "The result," says the *Wall Street Journal,* is the protection of "eastern labor unions, industrial plants and resources from competition. The environmental movement provides a convenient mask for any eastern legislators who want westerners for customers, not competitors."

Another result of the colonial administration of Alaskan lands from Washington is the exacerbation of the energy crisis. "The Independent Petroleum Association says that as a result of law or administrative procedures about 500 million federal acres, roughly one-fourth of the U.S., are off limits to oil and gas development," reports the *Journal.* "At a time when we are growing increasingly dependent on unstable foreign sources of energy, the most rapidly growing aspect of the American economy is the land and resources that are being removed from development."

But what about the thousands of people who sincerely desire to preserve the natural beauty of the environment? Who believe that human beings benefit from access to such preserved lands? Let them take their case to the free market. They won't be disappointed. According to a recent issue of *Time* magazine, two California businessmen have been making financial killings by buying thousands of acres of wilderness and operating them as private wilderness parks. So far they've developed the 5100 acre R-Ranch in Northern California's Siskiyou County, the 7000 acre Pines Recreational Park, also in Northern California, and the Stallion Springs Horse Ranch in Southern California. No one is allowed to build anything, dig anything or drive anything on this land; only campers, hikers and nature lovers are welcome, and only if they pay. The use of the private wilderness parks is limited to those who buy shares in the ownership; that saves them from the despoilment most state parks suffer, and it gives those who use them an incentive to keep them clean and unspoiled: if they litter, they'll be littering their own property.

Perhaps the most important fact in the *Time* magazine report on these new privately owned wilderness parks is the news that the men who are developing them are making a lot of money doing it: that there's a demand, on the market, for the kind of wilderness conservation the government would like us to believe is only possible through public ownership of land. It isn't always or necessarily true that the drive to make money produces despoilers of nature.

Libertarians have been arguing for centuries that it is unnecessary for government to protect its citizens from themselves, because most people are much better judges of how they can best live their own lives than even the noblest and best of government bureaucracies. They've also argued that the main result of using government to protect people from each other is that the people you most need to be protected from will tend over time to become part of the government. Government, in other words, is useless at protecting people from themselves, and dubious at protecting them from each other. It should come as no surprise, then, that it's not really necessary for government to protect Mother Nature either. —JR

Libertarianism and the victim's rights: capital punishment

IN A FREE AND VOLUNtary society, someone who suffered death as the result of a premeditated act of killing or as the result of a premeditated act of aggression would have the right, enforceable by his assigned agent or heir, to equal punishment being enforced against the killer. The victim, agent or heir might, of course, be willing to forego that punishment and accept some other punishment instead. That is the right of any victim—to opt for a lesser punishment than the one he has a right to enforce against an aggressor. But, it is central to the concept of a libertarian society that the victim has the right, at the least, to a punishment of the aggressor equal to the crime inflicted on the victim. Historically, stateless and quasi-libertarian societies have based their successful criminal codes upon that right, including the right of the murderer's victim to the execution of the murderer.

Christianity, and other religions, have tended to seek to eliminate or reduce the extent of that right of the victim in an attempt to create conditions of reconciliation and peace. But, for the most part, this has been in the context of military and non-commercial societies where the official culture encouraged bloodletting. In one sense, much of the problem of crime in general and murder in particular at the present time is the result of the growth of a violent sub-culture in the midst of a commercial, peaceful society. There has been a reversal of the transformation of society from the military to the commercial (as Herbert Spencer would describe it). This reversal is rooted in the increase of state power, i.e., in organized violence. It will lessen as the extent of state power lessens. But in the meantime, the victims of this violence resulting from the increase in state power should continue to have their right to equal justice unimpaired so that they may exercise it against life-taking aggressors.

Of course, there is validity in the arguments of those who propose that not taking the murderer's life may be more beneficial to the victim, his agent or heirs. These might prefer that the criminal's life be spared so that the net product of his work could pay whatever the adjudged monetary compensation would be for the victim, his agent or heirs. But if they prefer the justice of ending the criminal's life to the benefits of the monetary compensation, that is their choice to make. Of course, because there is the possibility of monetary compensation, many persons may decide to bind their agents or heirs by contracts with trustees to pursue the route of justice through execution in order to insure that heirs and murderers do not have an incentive to take their lives.

A point of discussion for libertarians would be the issue of the use of the existing state structure for the implementation of the victim's right to the execution of his murderer. Certainly, if libertarians were prepared to set up an alternative juridical

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system to provide the death penalty as an alternative to the present state structure, once that alternative system became operative, opposition to use of the current state courts would become logical. However, currently one of the major arguments for an alternative juridical system in the eyes of the public is the failure of the existing state system to enforce the victim's right with reference to his murderer. It is the state's failure to provide recourse for this right which has created one of the bases for public support of the libertarian philosophy. At the same time, the right of a victim to justice through the existing court system in lieu of an alternative juridical system is reasonable and just. Anyone is free to boycott that system and to eschew his rights, if he chooses to do so. But no libertarian can argue in favor of the denial of a victim's right to justice through the only means which does exist to provide that service.

Obviously, given the fact that the state court system is very likely to handle the judicial function incompetently, it is possible that some who are not guilty could be executed. Thus, libertarians should demand the greatest observation of the rights of the accused until found guilty. However, criticism should not be directed against the legitimate service of capital punishment but against strict application of the rights of the accused until proven guilty. It is the duty of libertarians both to defend the public's right to equal justice with murderers, and to criticize any tendency by the public, in the context of the state court system's failure to provide that service, to seek redress in a lessening of the civil rights of the accused until proven guilty. —LPL

UPI

"Carter administration foreign policy is not a whit less confused than that of Nixon and Kissinger."

Guest Editorials

Professors and policies

ONE OF THE MAIN troubles with American foreign policy these days is that it is the product of professors —theorists, conceptualizers —the gnomes of Harvard and Columbia and other notable American academies that furnish every administration's foreign policy establishment. What we see is not that myth of the liberals —the "militarization of foreign policy." It is rather the *intellectualization* of foreign policy. The whole reference of policy-making has shifted away from the practical realities of our own political, social, and economic system, to the abstract state of the outside world. There is heightened sesitivity to the so-called global "correlation of forces" (to borrow a Marxist term). There is an inordinate emphasis on maintaining the "credibility" of American force and preserving external "equilibrium."

This is an outside-in way of looking at foreign policy. Domestic loyalties and resources are mobilized by our government to support the game of foreign affairs—which is played by power-dazzled academics, in its own airy terms of national prestige and international influence. They play nations like "cards," and pursue their triangular geopolitical schemes; they tilt or unhinge regional balances, and invite exemplary tests of strength and resolve. The score is kept, not in terms of national well-being and the safety of the individual American citizen, but in a sort of "zero-sum" calculus, where other nations' gains are necessarily our losses, and vice versa.

For all their heavyweight verbiage, there is a real confusion on the part of our academic policy-makers about the purpose of foreign policy—a confusion that the Carter administration shares with its predecessors. Brzezinski is not a whit different in this respect from Kissinger. Watching these people, you get the sense, not of people at work, but of people at play—though it is a rather grim kind of play. It certainly isn't business as most of us understand it. Instead, there has to be a big theme. In the words of Brzezinski, you "choose" a "focus"—something like "planetary humanism" or "power realism," or the "managed interdependence" that is exemplified by Brzezinski's own Trilateral Commission. And then you make up the rules.

In all their fabulous intellectual games, to which most citizens are invited as idle spectators, the professor-strategists never bring foreign policy down to the bottom line—how other nations' behavior, and what we do to influence it, might affect the lives and interests of ordinary American citizens. I would almost rather entrust our foreign policy—insofar as I would entrust it at all—to a tactical commander who understands what a ditch is, a patch of cover; that a wound hurts or disables; that you, and others, can get killed in an attack or in a defense; that there are always unforeseen losses; and that some odds are too steep to accept no matter what the prospect of possible gain.

The habit of confrontation

YOU ALL REMEMBER the foreign policy of Nixon and Kissinger. Despite their professions of peace-making, detente, and international cooperation, they waged a belligerent foreign policy—intent on creating positions of strength; concerned with a reputation for decisive, violent actions; dependent on nuclear threats; anxious

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to fight for balances of power at the drop of a bomb, or a missile. They were prone to globalize every regional encounter—any local revolution, military coup, or change of government, any nationalization or expropriation, any little border war between neighboring countries.

Indeed, a succession of American administrations for the past three decades has developed a habit of confrontation. And the Carter administration, despite its criticism of Nixon and Kissinger before it came to office, is no exception or improvement. If anything, there is even more confrontation and less cooperation—particularly with our major adversary, the Soviet Union. There is more to defend in the world now, and so there will be more occasions to defend it. To the traditional objects of quarrels between nations, the Carter administration has added some additional baggage: economic warfare, and "human rights"—the knee-jerk defense of our own peculiar values in other countries.

By adopting a so-called "global agenda," and by insisting on the "linkage" of all things with the behavior of the Soviet Union, the Carter-Brzezinski regime has multiplied the occasions for intervention abroad.

To get the flavor of this administration's approach to foreign policy, you have to look at Brzezinski's obsession with what he calls "will." Every foreign challenge and probe is somehow a test of our resolve, our crediblity. To him the only trouble with Vietnam was that it has induced a "self-imposed paralysis," as he puts it.

But this is just a tissue of abstractions. Because, when we speak of the "will" of a nation, we aren't talking about the state of mind of an individual. We are talking about the operation of a complex political and social system—the United States. A president can't just exercise his "will"—he can only try to mobilize support from the citizens of his country. And support is what is eroding in this country, as Americans begin to understand the full costs, and experience the pains and sacrifices, of our forty-year binge of interventionist foreign policy.

Zbigniew Brzezinski

The Carter-Brzezinski administration is trying to impress upon our adversaries in the world certain "codes of conduct," or "rules of the game." Well, they can invent the rules, but how do they propose to enforce them? Who will put the bell on the cat? And at whose expense? The Carter administration isn't giving much thought to those questions, as it calls for 139-billion-dollar defense budgets and perpetuates double-digit inflation.

Individual American citizens are being asked to spend and risk in order to put some cards in the hands of a small coterie of foreign policy bureaucrats, who want to play their power games in the world.

—Earl C. Ravenal

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OPENING SHOTS SHOTS SHOTS

BILL BIRMINGHAM

ON JANUARY 8, 1979, the US Supreme Court, with only two dissenters, refused to hear the appeal of two women serving life sentences for possessing or selling less than an ounce of cocaine. One of the dissenters, Justice Thurgood Marshall, denounced the New York City law under which the two were sentenced as unconstitutionally severe, noting that it makes first time offenders liable to even longer sentences than those for manslaughter and forcible rape. But since it takes four or more justices to grant review of an appeal, the Court let it stand. On January 9, the following day, the Court ruled 8 to 1 that by exempting women from involuntary jury duty, the State of Missouri had denied a murder suspect a jury made up of a cross-section of the community, and so trampled upon his constitutional rights.

Great Moments in Political Philosophy: On January 11, 1979. Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-CA) is inspired to denounce Billy Carter's business dealings with Libyans in these words: "I find it unspeakably low that a man uses his relationship with the President of the United States to promote foreign policy interests which I believe are contrary to the best interests of the United States." (*Los Angeles Times,* January 12, 1979.)

"If they were combined, an authoritative British naval writer said today, Arab navies in the Mediterranean could threaten the supremacy there of the US Sixth Fleet." (Reuters, January 10, 1979.) The expert is one John Marriott, who has made a study of modern fast missile boats. Descendants of the torpedo boats of World War II, they measure 150 feet or less in length, but carry guided missiles that can sink much larger vessels. During the Six Day War of 1967, for example, an Egyptian FMB used a Soviet-made *Styx* missile, costing about $20,000, to sink the $150 million Israeli destroyer *Elath.* The Arab nations on the Mediterranean will soon have 77 fast missile boats. Throw in Yasser Arafat's submarine (Libya recently gave the Palestine Liberation Organization a sub they had lying around, which the PLO christened the *Fatah*) and the Arab forces might well be able to seriously cripple the American fleet. One more reason, if one were needed, for an isolationist foreign policy.

They may be calling him a son of a camel, or whatever, by the time you read this, but last December Egyptians still liked Jimmy Carter well enough to write poems asking Allah to cure his hemorrhoids. One example, quoted in the Cairo paper *Al Akhbar,* says: "May Allah cure you Carter, because you are a genuine and candid man," and "this illness should have been inflicted on an unjust leader rather than on you, oh Carter."

Carter has withdrawn his nomination of Norval Morris to head the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, thanks in part to the vociferous opposition of the National Rifle Association and assorted bluenoses. Morris, dean of the University of Chicago Law School, enraged these people with his support for gun control and decriminalizing victimless crimes. *Libertarian Review* was not enraged, however; the sainted Senior Editor hailed the nomination in an LR editorial last October, considering Morris's libertarian views on pot of more moment than his statist views on pistols. According to Charles Babcock of the *Washington Post,* however, Morris recanted at his Senate confirmation hearings; calling his own beliefs "utopian", "stupid oversimplification" and "inept overstatement"—and suggesting that if he were confirmed he might impose "a moratorium on the greater spread of my views." Except, it would seem, his views on "domestic disarmament", which he blandly dismissed as applying only to handguns. The spectacle of Morris standing firm on gun confiscation while caving in on victimless crimes is something for all of us to take to our hearts, against the next time we are tempted to embrace some turkey as "almost a libertarian."

The New York metropolitan area, where they have more gun controls than Norval Morris ever dreamed of, also had the second highest murder rate in the country in 1977, according to new data released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. New York's murder rate of 17.1 per hundred thousand was surpassed only by Houston's 18 per hundred thousand. Miami, where so-called "Saturday Night Specials" are banned and one must pass a written examination to own a handgun is tied for third place with the Los Angeles-Long Beach area, where there are no gun controls to speak of. Atlanta, Georgia, which had the country's highest murder rate in 1974, dropped to tenth place in 1977. Did Atlanta pass a new gun law? Indeed it did; the Atlanta police are now *required* to issue any law-abiding adult resident a per-

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mit to carry a concealed weapon, on request.

The Ohio chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, which is campaigning against the death penalty, recently held a fund-raising dinner—of bread and water. According to the Ohio ACLU's executive director, this was meant to show that "even the alternative to the death penalty—life imprisonment—is a harsh, somber and serious punishment." For five dollars, diners got harsh white bread; somber rye and serious whole wheat cost $10 and $15; and for $25, hard-core masochists were punished with toast and Perrier water.

It is now legal to own a round toilet seat in Connecticut, which had outlawed them in 1939 "because," says the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "of a mistaken belief that venereal disease could be transmitted via round toilet seats." Anyone caught with a round seat, even in his own bathroom, could be fined up to $100.

Frontiers of Racial Justice Dept.: Dearborn, Michigan, has a large Arabic-speaking population, many of whom are poor. So many, in fact, that the city is petitioning the federal government to reclassify Arabs from "Caucasian" to a "special designation." "This," says the *Washington Post*, "would help them receive more federal aid."

Just before he was scheduled to go on trial for murdering a narcotics dealer in the South Bronx, Jaime Vila, called Teenager by his friends, picked up the *New York Times* to see himself described as the head of a $30 million-a-year heroin dealing enterprise and generally an unpleasant person, in part of what promised to be a six-part series of articles. Naturally Mr. Vila's lawyer asked a New York Supreme Court justice to bar the *Times* from publishing the rest of the series until his client's trial was over. But the request was denied. "You don't mess with the press in advance of trial unless you are an extremist," said Justice Donald Zimmerman. "The *New York Times* is within its constitutional right to dump on Mr. Vila before his trial." Oliver Wendell Holmes, eat your heart out.

From the classified ads section of *Seven Days* comes a pitch for *Andrew Ant the Anarchist*; "a beautifully illustrated radical children's book. . . . Follow the adventures of Andrew Ant as he struggles for socialism." Not quite the Termite Left that enrages Edith Efron so; but confusing the Hymenoptera with the Isoptera is a typical bit of countercultural sleaze.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission did not publish a list of "hazardous toys" this Christmas, to the Pavlovian indignation of the liberal Americans for Democratic Action. "The CPSC is shirking its duties again," ranted an ADA spokesperson. "Any parent or any child can go into a toy store and see that there are unsafe toys."

Run your car on money? Soon you may be able to do just that, thanks to research conducted by—appropriately enough—the United States Army. The US Army Research and Development Command in Notick, Massachusetts has developed a new strain of fungus that converts the cellulose in paper money (or food stamps for that matter) to sugar, which is then fermented into alcohol for use as a gasoline substitute. If the alcohol is mixed with gasoline in a ratio of one to nine, "the savings could be enormous," by one estimate. That estimate, I hasten to add, assumes one uses bills that have been withdrawn from circulation (or similar sources) at a cost of about $5 per ton of cellulose waste. For the time being, one can still get better fuel economy by buying gas with one's money instead of turning it into alcohol; yet who knows what tomorrow, and OPEC, and the printmasters of the Federal Reserve may bring?

James Earl Carter—beloved of Allah?

By now it's no news that SAVAK, the Iranian secret police, tortures Iranian dissidents. But you may have missed a little item in the *New York Times* (January 7, 1979) in which the CIA's former chief Iran analyst, Mr. Jesse J. Leaf, reveals that not only did the CIA help set up SAVAK in the 1950s, but "a senior CIA Official was involved in instructing officials in the SAVAK on torture techniques," based on German methods "from World War II." And the CIA was quite aware of how its Iranian pupils were putting their education into practice: "I do remember seeing and being told of people who were there seeing the rooms and being told of torture," says Leaf. "And I know that the torture rooms were toured and it was all paid for by the USA." Your tax dollars at work. ❑

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THE MEDIA

"Reading, Writing and Reefer"—ignorance, innuendo and intolerance

HENRY LOUIS

ACCORDING TO nationally syndicated columnist John Lofton, the recent NBC documentary, "Reading, Writing and Reefer", which aired on December 10, has proved to be one of the network's all time most popular programs. NBC has been deluged with requests for dubs of the hour-long program on film or video tape—presumably for use in "stirring up the animals" at local anti-marijuana meetings. It should be pretty effective for such purposes: the network says it's also received letters from young pot smokers who were made to understand the true dangers of their vice by watching "Reading, Writing and Reefer" and who have since quit.

Lofton himself, ever on the alert for merrymakers who have somehow gone unpunished, has been doing whatever he can to spread the word. And, in combination with NBC and the network's numerous other apologists and yes men in the media, he seems to have succeeded in convincing the American people that the principal issues raised by "Reading, Writing and Reefer" are the social and medical dangers of marijuana use and the possible consequences of the present drift toward legalization. In fact there was only one issue raised by NBC's compendium of ignorance, innuendo and over-simplification: the issue of bigotry, the bigotry of those who do not use marijuana, when they find themselves confronted by those who do.

That this is the single issue actually and clearly presented by the NBC documentary becomes more obvious when one performs a simple experiment. Consider the following exchange, quoted from Act I of "Reading, Writing and Reefer":

Edwin Newman: Lisa is fifteen now, but she has been smoking marijuana for a long time.

Q. When did you start smoking regularly?

A. In the 7th grade.

Q. How much did you smoke?

A. About four or five joints a day.

Q. How long have you been smoking four or five joints a day?

A. Three years.

Q. What effect did it have on you?

A. I liked the high.

Now consider the same passage, slightly reworded to accord better with a different set of drug prejudices:

Edwin Newman: Lisa is fifteen now, but she has been drinking coffee for a long time.

Q. When did you start drinking coffee regularly?

A. In the 7th grade.

Q. How much did you drink?

A. About four or five cups a day.

Q. How long have you been drinking four or five cups a day?

A. Three years.

Q. What effect did it have on you?

A. I felt more energetic.

It seems reasonably safe to conjecture that no one today would be shocked or scandalized by this reworked version of the passage from "Reading, Writing and Reefer", but they appear to have been outraged by the original version. Why? Both marijuana and coffee are psychoactive drugs. Both have been called "dangerous" and have been blamed for various medical and social problems. Both have been proscribed by law. Both have been adopted as drug-of-choice by youthful radicals, and both have therefore been associated in the popular mind with the rebellious, bohemian lifestyle of such young people.

The only difference is, really, that so much time has passed—more than a hundred years—since the day when coffee was popularly regarded with the horror now reserved for marijuana, that the associations have died. The average American regards his morning cup(s) of coffee, not as a "fix", not as an administration of a psychoactive drug without which he finds it difficult or impossible to perform optimally, but as a pretty much harmless beverage which has the desirable effect of "picking him up". The point is, it is possible to look at the daily use of marijuana in the same way. Those four or five joints a day are only "cigarette breaks" which have the desirable effect of "mellowing you out"—of making it easier to deal affably with frustrations, irritants, and problems of concentration.

Is this a reasonable way of looking at daily dopesmoking? There can be little doubt that millions of Americans do in fact look at it in just that way. The ranks of lawyers, doctors, professors, journalists, advertising and public relations professionals—of young professionals generally between the ages of 25 and 40—are now riddled with attractive, ambitious, socially graceful, talented, creative, upwardly mobile people who smoke marijuana every day in the same way and for the same reasons that many of their colleagues smoke tobacco and drink coffee. But are their habits really analogous? Or is marijuana smoking, as NBC portrays it: more dangerous even than alcohol, much less something as tame as coffee?

Well, consider NBC's portrayal of marijuana in more detail: according to "Reading, Writing and Reefer", marijuana is an especially dangerous drug for four distinct reasons. First, it leads users into what used to be called the "amotivational syndrome". Where school kids are concerned, this means skipping school, no longer bothering to pay attention in class, letting one's grades fall off, ignoring one's homework assignments, and, in the current youth vernacular, becoming "burned out":

Edwin Newman: The young man we're talking to spends a lot of time just sitting and listening to music. Keith is sixteen. He's been a daily marijuana user for more than a year. Now his friends call him "burned out."

Q. Have you ever done anything when you were really stoned that you were really proud of? You know, put a bike together or anything like that, or is it mostly just sitting when you are stoned?

A. Well, I may have done it but I

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don't really remember it, you know. Just nothing that is really important. When I am stoned I just like sitting back and just listening to music, mostly. That is what I like doing when I am high.

Q. But if you stay stoned most of the time that means that is what you do most of the time.

A. Yes.

It is illuminating to reflect on the value judgements which have been smuggled into this discussion of the amotivational syndrome and left carefully unquestioned: it is worthwhile to attend school, make good grades, do homework, put bicycles together; it is a waste of time to listen to music. Needless to say, this set of value judgements is wide open to criticism. *Why* is it worthwhile to spend one's days as an inmate of an armed prison camp, memorizing and regurgitating irrelevant data like the dates of Millard Fillmore's term in office, and paying extortion to the members of teenage gangs for the privilege of using the restroom? Listening to music would seem a more reasonable way in which to spend one's time by almost any sensible set of standards.

But the question of value-judgements aside, consider the kind of evidence NBC marshals for its rejuvenation of the amotivational syndrome: spot interviews with a handful of school kids. They might have turned instead to the most thorough of the various controlled studies of long-term chronic marijuana use, Vera Rubin and Lambros Comitas's *Ganja in Jamaica*, which was sponsored by the Center for Studies of Narcotic and Drug Abuse and the National Institute of Mental Health, and was published in book form by Anchor Press in 1976. Rubin and Comitas studied a group of working class Jamaicans who had been daily users of the herb since childhood. Some of them had begun smoking at the age of eight; all had begun smoking before their twentieth birthdays. Rubin and Comitas concluded that

> The concern of many in the United States that marihuana creates an "amotivational syndrome" and a "reduction of the work drive" is not borne out by the life histories of Jamaican working-class subjects or by objective measurements, which indicate that acute effects may alter the rate and organization of movement and the expenditure of energy during work, but that heavy use of *ganja* does not diminish work drive or the work ethic.

The sloppy research which went into "Reading, Writing and Reefer", and which led to the omission of such findings as the one just cited, extends also to the second reason NBC has found for believing marijuana to be a dangerous drug: it allegedly causes cancer. "Most young people already know," Newman intones, "that the tar in tobacco smoke contains carcinogens which can cause cancer. But many do not know that research has shown even more carcinogens in the tar from marijuana smoke." The "research" to which Newman refers is that of Dr. Donald Tashkin of UCLA, who, according to Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld, writing in the January 18, 1979 issue of the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*,

> believes marijuana does something to lungs that tobacco doesn't, i.e., affect large airway resistance and conductance. He prepared graphs comparing various lung functions in tobacco and marijuana users, including airway resistance and conductance. Extrapolating from the graphs, it would theoretically take 112 cigarettes a week to produce the same large airway changes as five joints a week. But even this theoretical comparison involves only two of many lung functions studied. Tashkin never meant to imply that marijuana was 21 times worse for the lungs than tobacco, only that it did something that tobacco didn't. He told me, "I kind of regret having agreed [with NBC] to that kind of comparison. I only referred to airway resistance."

And it isn't only Dr. Tashkin who balks at calling marijuana more carcinogenic than tobacco. Dr. Frank Raucher of the American Cancer Society says his organization is unconvinced that marijuana causes cancer, but he believes that even if it does, the risk is far lower than for tobacco smokers—and only one in a thousand tobacco smokers contracts the disease. The American Medical Association has refused to take a position at all on the claim that marijuana is carcinogenic, urging increased research to find out for sure.

But taking the time to find out for sure doesn't make TV documentaries sensational. And if they aren't sensational, they don't make out well in the ratings. Perhaps this is why NBC decided not only to grossly oversimplify the facts about marijuana and cancer, but also to rely entirely on unproved (and probably unprovable) assertions in presenting its third and fourth reasons for regarding marijuana as "dangerous". Reason number three is that marijuana makes for dangerous driving. "Tests at the Southern California Research Institute have shown," Newman announces solemnly, "that marijuana severely impairs a driver's perception, concentration, reaction time and overall driving skill."

Just a minute! you want to say. What is the Southern California Research Institute? How did they find the impairment produced by pot compares with the impairment produced by alcohol? But there's no time to dwell on such questions, because already the assertions are flying thick and fast.

"It is a major source of death, of injury, of property loss in the country right now, because of drivers stoned on marijuana," says Dr. Robert DuPont, former head of the National Institue for Drug Abuse. "Let me make it clear," pleads politician-on-the-make Keith Stroup, who is destined soon to leave the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, "that the research is now convincing, that you should not smoke marijuana and drive an automobile, period."

Why does none of these gentlemen do the obvious and cite statistics showing the number of accidents in which marijuana was a causative factor? Why don't they present the views of the auto insurance industry, which bases its rates on facts, not assertions, but which has not instituted higher premiums for dopesmokers as it has for alcohol drinkers? Could it be, possibly, that the facts are not as these gentlemen claim?

One certainly suspects as much of the fourth and final and most sensational of all NBC's reasons for hating and fearing marijuana. "It is entirely possible," says Dr. Sidney Cohen of UCLA, the John Kenneth Galbraith of drug-abuseologists, "that youngsters who smoke lots of good pot over long periods of time sustain some mental impairment which is not completely reversible. It may go on for months and there is a suspicion some of it may be permanent so that they are not as keen, as sharp as they were previously." But where is the evidence for this possibility, this suspicion? "Some of them will stop, I would hope, and recoup," says Dr. Cohen. "Others who continue to use this good material and continue over many years may be so impaired that they will never function at their best level of effectiveness."

Does it really need to be said? This isn't evidence. It is unsupported assertion—just as it was when Thomas Edison told the American people in 1914 that cigarette smoking "has a violent ac-

(continued on page 18)

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THE PLUMB LINE

The menace of the space cult

MURRAY N. ROTHBARD

AFTER THE great breakthrough events of 1978—the victory of Proposition 13, the subsequent tax revolt, the election of the first Libertarian Party candidate in History (Dick Randolph to the Alaska State House), and Ed Clark's fantastic 375,000 votes for governor of California—the Libertarian Party stands ready to enter the mainstream of American political life. It has the glorious opportunity to turn America around, to move us swiftly and rapidly in the direction of liberty. In September, it will choose a Presidential candidate who could easily gain a million votes in 1980, and possibly a great deal more.

Yet just when the day of victory draws near, a menace from within the Party has reared its ugly head. We have had to write many times over the years of the crazies, the *lumpen,* the radical "decentralist" enemies of organization *per se,* the irrationalists and fantasts who refuse to learn or care about real-world political issues but instead hold up science fiction as the true and ultimate embodiment of libertarianism. We had thought that the growth and development of the Libertarian Party had selected out the crazies, that they had all dropped out of the party into the solipsistic land of their dreams and visions. Unfortunately, we were wrong. The danger is still there, and it could wreck the best and brightest hope for liberty in over a century.

The menace suddenly surfaced when Ed Crane, chairman of the committee planning the September Libertarian Party convention, submitted its proposed program to the National Committee at Las Vegas on January 14. The program was a superb one, built around the theme of "Toward a Three-Party System," with all the speeches and workshops centering around national political developments in the context of the Libertarian Party's soon becoming the third major party in the United States. The speeches and workshops would abandon the numerous unfocused irrelevancies of past conventions to concentrate on real, pressing, political concerns—on how the government, led by the Democrats and Republicans, is messing up our lives, and how and what we can do about it. It would draw important speakers from across the political spectrum—welcoming those who would share important political concerns with Libertarians. It would be a real-world program suitable for a party of liberty about to enter the mainstream of American life.

At which point, the opposition surfaced in force, and an illuminating debate ensued in the National Committee, a debate which unfortunately is not enshrined on tape. A number of critics of the proposed program began to whine: "The program is all about *politics.*" "Politics is a downer." "Who cares if we become one of the major parties?" And most incredible of all, "None of this motivates people." I was astonished! How could an LP leader fail to become ecstatic over actually becoming a major party, over molding real-world politics in the direction of freedom? And if they are not so motivated, why in blazes are they in the Libertarian Party at all? Why haven't they openly joined the dropouts in lotus-land?

Since I was scheduled to give an update of my "optimism" speech, I was puzzled over the alleged absence of optimism in the convention program. What did they want? The answer surfaced soon enough: they want science fiction, they want "futurism," they want eternal life, they want projections of visions of a technological fantasy-land. In short, they *equate* real world politics, indeed, the real world *period,* with gloom; "optimism" is only the loving contemplation of their own fancies.

But *why*? Why do professed libertarians of what we may call the "space cadet" wing equate optimism with an eternal chewing of the cud of their fantasies, of their technocratic version of the Big Rock Candy Mountain, the Paradise which they see in their crystal-balls? If they are really libertarians, why isn't the glorious prospect of *freedom* enough to motivate their actions as libertarians?

As the debate intensified, the answer to *this* puzzle became all too clear: these soothsayers and space cadets *don't* really care all that much for liberty. They don't in fact, care very much for the real world or reality. What motivates them is not the prospect of liberty, but spinning phantom scenarios of the never-never land of Eden. They are interested in freedom only because they think it will help them reach their millennial Paradise. As one of the space cadets admitted, when charged with promoting a religion instead of a political philosophy: "Yes, we want a religion." The millennial religion of a thousand cults, the promise that wishing hard enough will make their vision of the Garden of Eden come true. All it lacks is a guru, a Messiah, a Moses, to lead the flock to the Promised Land.

But this is indeed a religion—it is not a political philosophy, and it sure as hell is not political action. Yet libertarians have not come to promise human beings a technocratic Utopia; we have come to bring everyone *freedom,* the freedom of each individual to pursue *whatever* his or her dreams of the future may be. Or even to have *no* vision of the future. Libertarianism is surely not all of life; it brings the gift of political freedom to every person to pursue his own goals. *His* goals, not ours. To call—as a *political party*—for a *specific* vision of the future, the space cadet vision, implies that that *particular* goal is going to be imposed on everyone, whether they like it or not.

This is not freedom: it is totalitarianism. Primitivists, after all, have rights too. They too should have the freedom, if they wish, to live unmolested on their own

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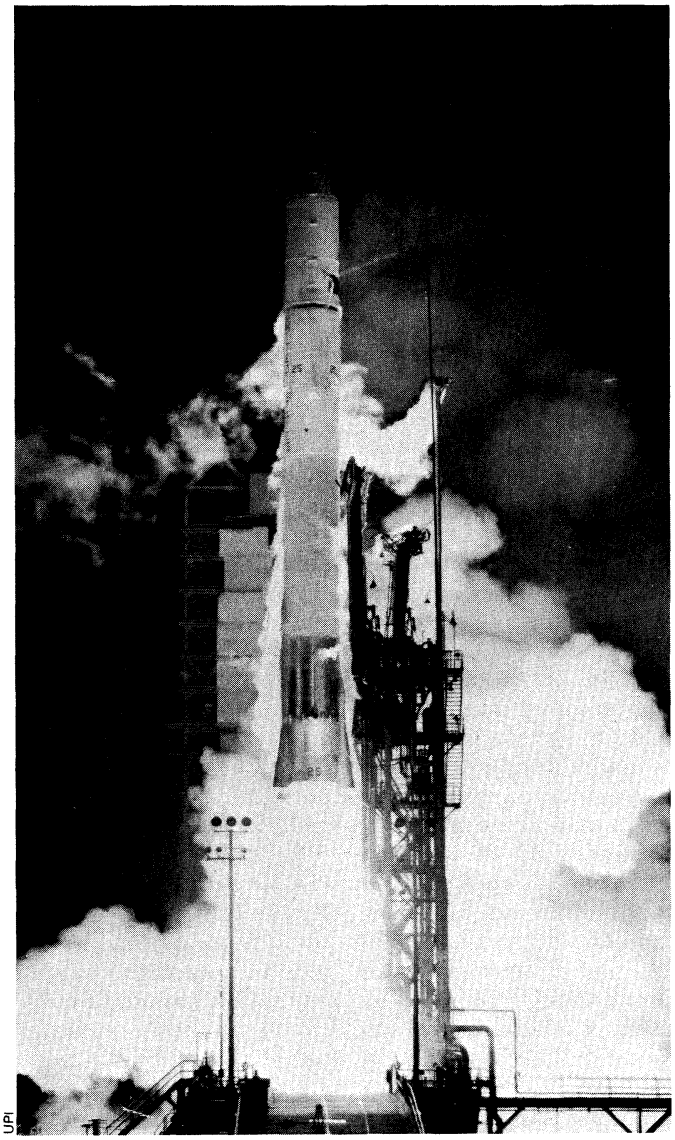
desired level. Thus, neither primitivists nor space cultists should be given a forum within the Libertarian Party to promote and impose their own favorite level of technology.

To put it succinctly: the goal of libertarianism is freedom, period. No more and no less. Anything less is a betrayal; but anything more is equally a betrayal of liberty, because it implies imposing our own goals on others. To be a libertarian must mean that one upholds liberty as the highest *political* end—not necessarily one's highest *personal* end. To confuse the issue, to mix in any sort of vision, technocratic or futuristic or any other, *with* politics, is to abandon liberty as that highest political goal, and at the very least to destroy the very meaning of a political movement or organization.

Oddly enough, space and the space program—which the great revisionist historian Harry Elmer Barnes aptly termed the "moondoggle" and "astrobaloney"—is precisely the area where the government has exercised total domination. Such futurist heroes of our "libertarian" space cultists as Dr. Gerard K. O'Neill are government-financed scientists and researchers whose projected "space colonies" will not be the "free space colonies" of our space-cultists' dreams, but projects totally planned and operated by the federal government. Yet instead of engaging in sober critiques of the governmental space program, our space cadets embrace these state futurists as virtually their own.

Let us recall how the great libertarian Ludwig von Mises heaped well-deserved scorn on the "futurist" fantasies of previous millennial movements. Mises wrote in his great work *Socialism* that:

> Socialist writers depict the socialist community as a land of heart's desire. Fourier's sickly fantasies go farthest in this direction. In Fourier's state of the future all harmful beasts will have disappeared, and in their places will be animals which will assist man in his labors—or even do his work for him. An anti-beaver will see to the fishing; an anti-whale will move sailing ships in a calm; an anti-hippopotamus will tow the river boats. Instead of the lion there will be an anti-lion, a steed of wonderful swiftness, upon whose back the rider will sit as comfortably as in a well-sprung carriage . . . Godwin even thought that men might be immortal after property had been abolished. Kautsky tells us that under the socialist society "a new type of man will arise . . . a superman . . . an exalted man." Trotsky provides even more detailed information [as befits a "futurist"!]: "Man will become incomparably stronger, wiser, finer. His voice more harmonious, his movements more rhythmical, his voice more musical. The human average will rise to the level of an Aristotle, a Goethe, a Marx. Above these other heights, new peaks will arise."



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"True, I talk of dreams,
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy."

—Shakespeare,
Romeo and Juliet

The English free-market economist P.T. Bauer points out in his work *Economic Analysis and Policy in Underdeveloped Countries* that:

> . . . the demand for these forecasts often stems from deep-seated psychological motives, and it is frequently unrelated to the accuracy of the forecasts. A great upsurge of interest in forecasting is usually evidence of an unhealthy panacea. I believe also that the great increase in the demand for these forecasts even by educated people, and the great prestige of their purveyors, are symptoms and harbingers of very deep-seated social and political transformations. A sudden resurgence in the activities and prestige of oracles and soothsayers in the Roman Empire in the second and third centuries testified to the decline in critical outlook and to the emergence of credulity, which prepared the way both for the acceptance of a new faith from the East and for the collapse of order, civilization, and even material well-being.

Bauer continues with an illuminating passage about this epoch from the historian W.E. Lecky: "The oracles that had been silenced were heard again; the astrologers swarmed in every city; the philosophers were surrounded with an atmosphere of legend; the Pythagorean school had raised credulity into a system. On all sides, and to a degree unparalelled in history, we find men . . . thirsting for belief, passionately and restlessly seeking a new faith."

So there we have it: two irreconcilable groups within the Libertarian Party: the Realists and the Necromancers, the "Earthlings" and the Space Cadets. Right now, the convention program seems safe, but with so much at stake we must tremble for the future. So let this canker from within the party be gone. Let the fantasts fly off to the outer space of their dreams. We shall be glad to give them all of outer space, if they will only let us have the earth.

But if they lack the full courage of their convictions, let them at least expend their energies at their science fiction and futurist conventions trying to influence their denizens to become libertarians. It won't matter much, but it certainly won't hurt. Let them only, for liberty's sake, stop crippling the finest hope for real freedom in the real world that we have seen in generations. Let this incubus be gone. ❑

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THE MOVEMENT

MILTON MUELLER

THE JANUARY 13–15 meeting of the Libertarian Party National Committee in Las Vegas had everything going for it: the first LP election victory to savor; the Ed Clark victory in California to build on; plans to be laid for the future, including the biggest LP National Convention ever, the 1979 presidential nominating convention in Los Angeles; and, amid politicking and rumormongering, the first declared candidate beginning the horserace for the LP presidential nomination.

That in the midst of all this, the actual proceedings of the National Committee still managed to be dull, inconsequential and often silly is no mean achievement. It was hard to believe, sometimes, that this National Committee was really the *leadership* of a snowballing movement. One got the impression that perhaps many members of this committee are artifacts of an older, more cultish libertarian movement, artifacts containing the worst—not the best—residue of Ayn Rand, psychobabble and the dumb-right. These artifacts, however, happen to be sitting on top of a future volcano; far from guiding or controlling this volcano, they are more likely to be blown away when it erupts.

More on the committee proceedings later. There were plenty of interesting and significant events going on *outside* the committee chambers to keep me busy.

For one, the weekend in Las Vegas's Showboat Hotel turned out to be a big coming-out party for Bill Hunscher, the only LP presidential hopeful to declare yet. Who will be chosen as the 1980 LP presidential candidate is a question of great importance. The momentum generated by the Clark campaign and by Dick Randolph's election needs to be maintained, and the LP should strive to do nationwide what Clark did in California. Furthermore, the LP nominee will be more than just a candidate. Ultimately, if the necessary breakthrough is made, the 1980 nominee will become an almost permanent representative of the LP and libertarianism. A lot of influence over the direction of the Party will fall into his or her hands.

The Showboat Hotel was plastered with "Bill Hunscher for President" signs, put up by Michael Emerling, Hunscher's paid campaign manager. A steady stream of party figures beat a path to Hunscher's top-floor suite, shepherded by the fast-talking, glad-handing Emerling.

Hunscher is a deep-voiced, strongly featured man. If he did not favor bow ties and 3-piece, pinstriped suits, one might expect to encounter him backpacking in the Rocky Mountain wilderness. His background is strongly Objectivist, though he shows none of the intolerance and cultishness that characterize many of like background. He read *Atlas Shrugged* during his army stint in Germany, then faithfully attended Rand's Ford Hall Forum lectures in Boston during the late sixties. He contributed to the Hospers campaign in 1972, but did not become fully active in the libertarian movement until 1975, when he was simultaneously elected to the State Republican Committee and the chair of the New Hampshire LP. "I was so turned off by the Republican Committee meetings," he says, "I decided to devote all my political efforts to the LP."

The New Hampshire LP flourished under his guidance and financial contributions. During his 1978 campaign as a Libertarian for the State Legislature, he was approached by Roger MacBride as a possible VP candidate. When MacBride dropped out due to the opposition his candidacy raised, Hunscher decided the field was open. With MacBride's blessing he declared. (MacBride sent a letter to party leaders promoting Hunscher and blaming his own refusal to run on Ed Crane's opposition. However, my own sources indicate that a number of party leaders were unexcited by the prospects of another MacBride candidacy, and many who were snubbed or neglected by MacBride in 1976 opposed him.)

When I first heard of Hunscher's candidacy, my immediate concern was with whether his campaign was designed to appeal to a particular faction within the movement. Although such a candidate would probably lose, a great deal of damage could be wrought by someone who, for example, took up the battle cry of Edith Efron and the disgruntled conservative "libertarians" who fear the emergence of a radical movement. Happily, though, Hunscher's candidacy has nothing to do with this or any other factional split. Hunscher is running on his own merits, and, judging from the many and various libertarians who traipsed to his hotel room in Las Vegas, he wants to be the nominee of the entire party. He is scrupulously refusing to grab a quick constituency by appealing to one faction or another.

How good a presidential candidate would Hunscher make? I interviewed him for some time on the issues. It became quickly apparent—and Hunscher is the first to admit it—that he has a lot to learn about being a candidate and about the issues. He states that if nominated he would "marshall all our resources"and learn from the scholars and intellectuals in the movement, so that he could address concrete issues in an informed, factual manner.

With the possibility of a Reagan candidacy, not to mention recent events in Iran, China, the Middle East and Africa, foreign policy is

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likely to be a crucial issue in 1980. Hunscher is clearly non-interventionist, though there are large gaps in his knowledge of foreign policy issues. But his military service in Germany has led him to extensive knowledge of the issues surrounding NATO and Western Europe. This is a tough issue for most people, but Hunscher is firmly convinced that we could withdraw troops there.

Hunscher's success as an entrepreneur in the highly competitive electronics and computer technology market has led him to a firm grasp of free-market issues, though he does not handle easily the sweeping, theoretical issues of political capitalism vs. market capitalism, the relation between inflation and unemployment, and so on.

All in all, given the many possibilities for divisive and/or shaky LP presidential aspirants, the Hunscher candidacy thus far comes off as serious and conscientious. I spent some time soliciting the opinions of various party leaders about Hunscher. One central concern arose: Hunscher's staff, and the people who "have his ear". While Hunscher and his managers express a willingness to learn, the general perception is that there needs to be an intellectual heavyweight directly involved in the operation. But there is no Walter Grinder, no Murray Rothbard, not even a Robert Poole on the Hunscher team. This issue is important. Libertarians need to stake out their own issue territory in 1980; and more—much more—than free market and civil liberties jingoism is needed to do so. It takes creative political thinking and a lot of facts to back up our analysis. Whether Hunscher can meet this challenge remains to be seen; there is nothing coming out of his campaign so far suggestive of a fresh, creative approach to the issues.

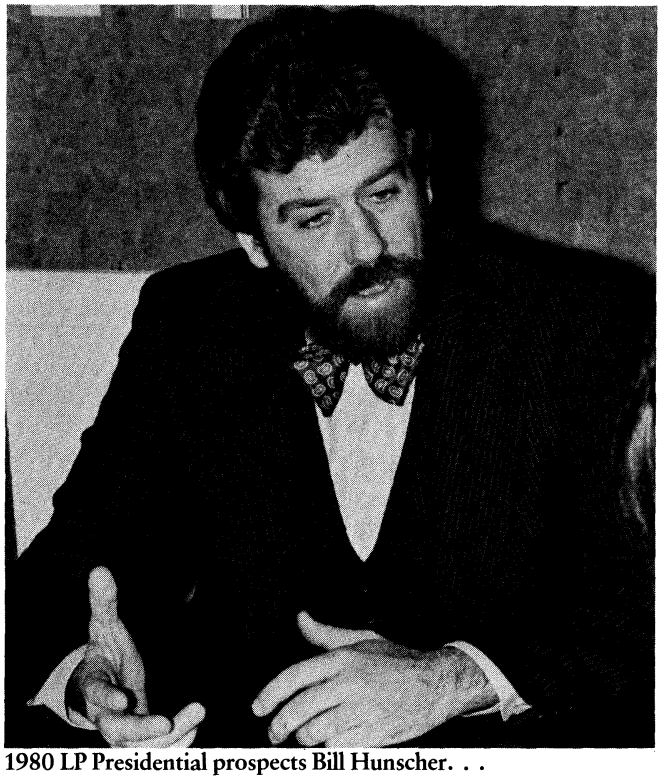
It is hard to imagine Hunscher walking to the nomination without any opposition. The LP is too diverse, and Hunscher himself says he welcomes another contender—sincerely, I think. Since MacBride has dropped out, however, the only possible contender being mentioned is Ed Clark of California. Clark refused to commit himself at the Las Vegas meeting, though. While he said it was possible he would seek the nomination, he is still assessing the situation.

The uncertainty and potential for new developments should warn libertarians against making any premature commitments. Unlike the major parties, which can buy delegates with patronage, an LP candidate for the nomination has to sweat it out until the final ballot. There are no primaries to win, and nothing for a delegate to gain by committing early.

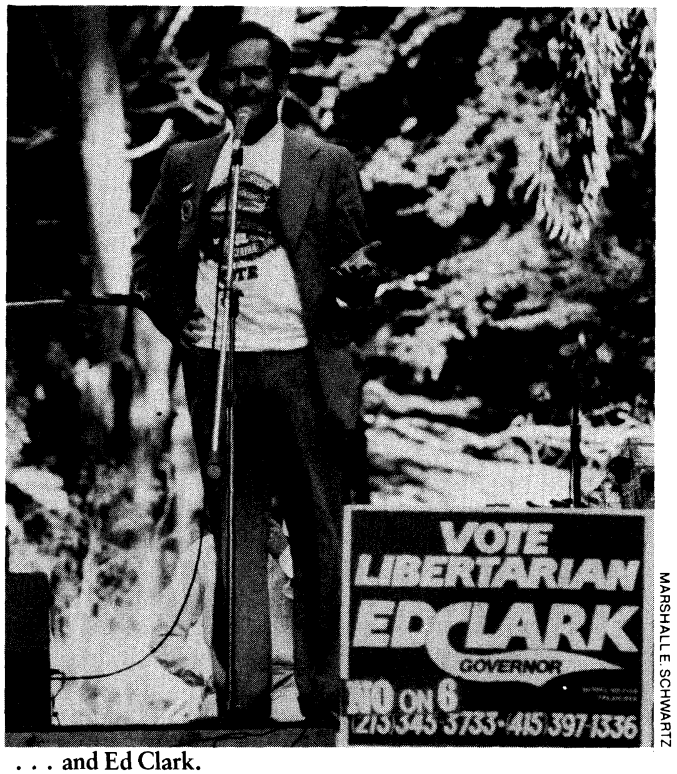
The Las Vegas meeting offered the National Committee its first chance to hear Dick Randolph, the only elected Libertarian state legislator. Randolph drew a standing ovation from the crowd of 65. He came across as a practical, nuts and bolts Libertarian elected official. He's not a thundering radical nor an electrifying leader. But he is a sprightly speaker full of witty attacks on big government. In his first few months as a legislator he has submitted a rather impressive package of 10 bills to the Alaska legislature. These include, among others, a bill to eliminate personal property taxes, a bill to stop his fellow legislators from receiving a salary increase, a tax credit and voucher scheme for education, and (my personal favorite) a resolution calling upon Alaskans to disobey a federal law that removed large chunks of land from private ownership. Randolph's performance will be an important factor in the press's evaluation of Libertarians in the future.

Ed Clark also spoke to the assembled party leaders, explaining how he handled issues and why he won the interest and respect of news people in California. In one of the most thoughtful presentations of the weekend, he proposed abolishing all taxation of food, and outlined his plans for an initiative to abolish the California sales tax.

The National Committee of the LP, whose meeting was ostensibly the reason for this whole gathering, met Saturday and Sunday. While more than 20 bodies sat around the table during the proceedings, the committee, as far as I can determine, has one creative member: Ed Crane. The proceedings of the Natcom can best be represented



1980 LP Presidential prospects Bill Hunscher. . .



. . . and Ed Clark.

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as a large puddle of mush in which every once in a great while, the sharp contours of a concrete program rose to the surface. Look closely at the program before it sinks back down—9 times out of 10 it will bear the signature of Ed Crane.

Right now, the LP is working on two major projects. One is the 1979 National Convention. As head of the convention committee, Crane submitted a detailed report outlining a proposed theme, structure, and potential speakers. Crane wants the theme to be "Toward a Three-Party System", and the convention to devote itself to concrete political issues. The second major LP project is the effort by the "50 in 80" committee, headed by Ed Crane and Jim Burns of Nevada, to achieve Ballot status in all fifty states in the 1980 election.

Another important item of business was the election of at-large members to the 1979 platform committee. Ed Crane ran for chair of the committee. The Platform is unlikely to change very much in 1979; all but three of the people elected to the committee were on it last time. Evers and Rothbard, Inc. were resoundingly elected; also elected were L. Neil Smith of Colorado, Tom Palmer of Maryland, David Theroux of California, and Rich Kenney of Washington— all repeats from 1977. The newcomers are Jule Herbert, LP chair of Alabama; Dallas Cooley of the Libertarian Health Association; and Sheldon Richman of the Delaware LP. Joan Kennedy Taylor, an LR associate editor and 1977 platform committee veteran, was elected over Crane to chair the committee.

The long and somewhat rancorous haggling over the convention plans sharply revealed the weaknesses and strengths (mostly weaknesses) of the present National Committee. A loosely organized faction opposed to Crane's plans met Saturday night to coalesce.

At first, it appeared the dissidents wanted the Los Angeles National Convention to host the presentation of a $5,000 "Prometheus Award". The award would be granted to the science fiction writer who best projected a libertarian view of the future. This idea arose out of the concern that the Libertarian Party should offer more than negative attacks on state power; a positive vision of the future, the dissidents thought, is needed. Good old pragmatic Chris Hocker, LP National director, expressed concern over whether a political party convention was the proper place for science fiction awards. Without ever resolving this issue, the debate shifted to whether the convention should include a panel on futurism, space colonization, and technological progress. While Bill Evers sneered at the "space cadets", and the space cadets hailed science fiction as the savior of society, nobody bothered to propose or oppose any specific speaker or topic. Yet the debate soon became even more empty and vague: the futurist faction decided that science fiction and space travel were not the real issue. What was important, the committee was told, was that libertarians should have a *positive*, future-oriented vision to attract its following. The theme of the convention should not be anything so bureaucratic and mundane as a "3-Party System". Fine—any counter proposals? "Close Encounters of the Third Party" maybe? But no suggestions were made. This did not stop the debate from raging for another 45 minutes.

Beneath the surface of this nonsense lies a serious division in the LP, believe it or not. The source and motivation of these factions and what they bode for the future, will be discussed in a future movement column. ❑

"Reading, Writing and Reefer"

(continued from page 13)

tion in the nerve centers, producing permanent and uncontrollable degeneration of the cells of the brain,"—just as it was when Dr. T. D. Crothers of the New York School of Clinical Medicine reported in 1902 that coffee addiction leads to "delusional states of a grandiose character. . . suspicions of wrong and injustice from others; also extravagant credulity and skepticism." Dr. Crothers went on to assert that "often coffee drinkers, finding the drug to be unpleasant, turn to other narcotics, of which opium and alcohol are most common."

Dr. Crothers said what he said about coffee, and Thomas Edison said what he said about cigarettes, for the same reason that Edwin Newman and his clatch of "experts" say what they say about marijuana—because the facts do *not* justify their strong personal aversion to the drug. And therefore, if they are to see their personal prejudice elevated to the status of a cultural norm (or, failing that, a law), they must use their powers of assertion to the fullest, and hope that at least certain of their Big Lies will be widely believed.

That there is, in fact, a hidden legislative agenda behind "Reading, Writing and Reefer" is strongly suggested by the portion of the program in which the issues of legalization and "decriminalization" are discussed. "Do you think," Newman asks Dr. Robert Dupont, "that there is a connection between the growing acceptance of decriminalization, and the number of young marijuana users?"

"I do," Dr. Dupont replies, "and I think it is tragic."

Yet the young marijuana smokers interviewed during the program, the young marijuana smokers who gave the documentary one of its few contact points with the real world as it exists outside the already-made-up minds of NBC's "experts"—these young marijuana smokers did not become involved with the drug because of decriminalization. They are residents of Florida and Georgia, which have among the most draconian pot laws in the United States.

But the facts, as we have seen, don't matter. What matters is that the prejudice, the preconceived idea of marijuana, be got across to the public with as much salesmanship as possible. Consider Newman's final plea to the viewing audience. But consider it as it should be considered—slightly reworded so that its fundamental bigotry shines through.

Edwin Newman: What should our society do about a twelve year old who drinks coffee daily? Before we can do anything we must recognize that Brian and hundreds of thousands like him are a new and special problem.

Up to now, our national debate has concerned itself mainly with the occasional use of coffee by adults. That debate is not likely to end soon. But our children cannot wait. We have to tell them something now.

Admittedly there are still some important things that we don't know about the long term effects of chronic coffee drinking on the human body, especially on children. But in the meantime our children are not being given the knowledge that is available now. They've not been told that the coffee they are drinking is ten times as potent as the stuff that college students were using five years ago. They've not been told about the cancer causing elements in coffee. Many of them don't even realize that coffee makes it dangerous to drive a car. It is not the children's fault that they don't know these things. It is the fault of our government, of our schools, of all of us. ❑

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LIBERTY'S HERITAGE

Auberon Herbert, voluntaryist

ERIC MACK

FROM THE EARly 1880s until his death in 1906, Auberon William Edward Molyneux Herbert was *the* hardcore libertarian figure in British intellectual and political life. While this country had both Benjamin Tucker and Lysander Spooner during this period, Britain had only Auberon Herbert. Of course, Britain was also the home of Herbert Spencer, whom Auberon Herbert saw as the fountainhead of libertarian ideas. But it was principally Herbert himself who represented the most consistently, radically, anti-State, pro-freedom position during these years.

Herbert was born in 1838, the youngest son of the third Earl of Carnarvon. In family, education (at Eton and Oxford), military service (with the seventh Hussars in India), and marriage, the Hon. Auberon Herbert was a well-placed member of the British ruling class. The Herberts were Tories, and Auberon Herbert's oldest brother eventually served in a succession of Conservative cabinets. Herbert himself organized Conservative debating societies at Oxford, and in his first try for a seat in the House of Commons in 1868 he stood as a Conservative. But by the late 1860s and early 1870s Herbert came to see himself as a radical liberal. In 1870 he tried again for a seat in Commons—this time as a Liberal, but again unsuccessfully. Then finally, in 1872, he won a by-election and entered the House as a Liberal.

During this period his more radical activities included declaring his republicanism in the House of Commons, and strongly supporting the formation of an agricultural laborer's union. He also, unfortunately, supported legislation for state education. But he insisted, at least, that this education be strictly nonsectarian. Retrospectively this stand is interesting because in one of his first fully libertarian essays, "State Education: Help or Hindrance?" (1880) Herbert came to maintain that for every good argument against state religion—and they were legion—there was a good parallel argument against state education. Still, as a final indication that during this earlier Parliamentary period Herbert had not yet arrived at his consistent libertarianism, we may note his sponsorship of something called the Wild Bird's Protection Act.

Herbert was, nevertheless, sufficiently troubled by the character of political life and institutions to decide not to stand for re-election in 1874. It was at this time that he met Herbert Spencer. And discussion with and reading of Spencer lead him to the view that

> thinking and acting for others had always hindered, not helped, the real progress; that all forms of compulsion deadened the living forces in a nation; that every evil violently stamped out still persisted, almost always in a worse form, when driven out of sight, and festered under the surface.

Indeed, this belief in the inefficacy of force, in its counterproductive and anti-progressive effects, was perhaps the most fundamental and constant element in Herbert's worldview. It was this belief which clearly was present, in more specific form, long before Herbert's explicit libertarianism. Thus when he wrote home from India as early as 1860 to express his opposition to the caste system, he added that British attempts to eliminate this system forcibly were likely to "trample the evil in, not out." And writing from America during the Civil War, he said, "I am very glad that slavery is done away with, but I think the manner is very bad and wrong." While Herbert may have intended here to support the right of secession, it is likely also that he felt that even slavery should not be forcibly trampled out—could not be genuinely and lastingly dissolved by mere force. Indeed, so fundamental was Herbert's opposition to the use of force that, as we shall see, his position sometimes threatened to slip into pacifism.

Herbert's anti-imperialism developed during the 1870s. As early as 1875 he expressed concern about Britain's involvement in the Suez project, and in 1878 he was one of the chief organizers of the anti-Jingoism rallies at Hyde Park, counteracting the momentum toward war with Russia. In the early 1880s he again opposed British intervention in Egypt as the use of national power to guarantee the results of particular speculations. His anti-imperialism also led him to demand Irish self-determination and, later, to oppose the Boer War.

As early as 1877 Herbert had been disturbed by the "constant undertone of cynicism" in the writings of Herbert Spencer, and he resolved, in contrast, to do full justice to the principled moral case for a free society. He refused to follow Spencer in the latter's growing intellectual accommodation to coercive institutions, especially taxation. And, in later years, Herbert always held himself somewhat distant from organizations such as the Liberty and Property Defense League which he felt to be "a little more warmly attached to the fair sister Property than . . . to the fair sister Liberty." In 1879, Herbert gave a series of talks to the Liberal Union of Nottingham expressing his now uncomprisingly individualist radicalism. And on the basis of those talks, he was denied the Liberal nomination for his old Commons seat. This experience must have solidified his decision to battle primarily with the pen.

Herbert's first major work was a series of essays collec-

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tively labeled "A Politician in Trouble About His Soul" which culminated in the segment, "A Politician in Sight of Haven." While the earlier sections dealt generally with the moral unsavoriness of party politics, the last segment outlined Herbert's Haven—a fully "voluntaryist" society in which the rights to self-ownership, liberty, and property were fully recognized and in which, therefore, all compulsory taxation was abolished. In 1885 Herbert brought out his most systematic work, *The Right and Wrong of Compulsion by the State.* Here he presented a series of arguments in defense of the rights of self-ownership and freedom from force and its moral equivalent, fraud. These arguments turned on the special role that each person's judgments about his happiness must play in his own life and moral well-being, and on the absurdities involved in the contrary claim that some people are the natural owners, in whole or in part, of others.

Herbert further argued for absolute respect for the holdings which individuals acquired through their labor without violating the rights of other individuals. And he included an important defense of freedom of contract in terms of his distinction between "direct" and "indirect" force. One party was subject to this misnamed "indirect" force when another party induced him to do something for which the first party would like greater payment. Herbert insisted that as long as the first party was not directly coerced into the exchange, his rights were not violated and, at least in his own eyes, he had benefited. Only direct force could prevent indirect force. And direct force *would* violate rights and leave some parties worse off than they were found. With respect to justifying defense, Herbert argued that one party's use of (direct) force against another placed the first party "outside the moral-relation" and "into the force-relation." On such an occasion the aggrieved party may use force for the sake of self-preservation. Such defensive force was, Herbert argued, of the nature of a usurpation, though it was a "justified usurpation". This ambivalence toward even defensive force persisted at least implicitly in many of Herbert's later writings.

One can get a sense of the radicalism of Herbert's work by this rough list of goals proposed in *The Right and Wrong of Compulsion by the State:* abolition of state enterprises and state-fostered monopolies, abolition of professional licensing, abolition of state and compulsory education, repeal of laws requiring vaccination, repeal of laws in violation of freedom of contract, repeal of Sunday blue laws, repeal of laws suppressing brothels and allowing the arrest of prostitutes, abolition of state constraints on marriage and divorce, abolition of the House of Lords, eventual (with the death of Victoria) conversion from monarchy, self-determination for Ireland, independence for India "without any attempt at developing its civilization according to British ideas and through taxation imposed by British force," withdrawal from entanglements in Egypt, and in general, "a strictly non-aggressive" foreign policy.

In 1890 Herbert founded the weekly (later changed to monthly) *Free Life,* "The Organ of Voluntary Taxation and the Voluntary State", which he continued to publish until 1901. In his optimism Herbert saw State-Socialism as the last gasp in the cause of aggressive force and he called for "One Fight More—The Best and the Last" against this "mere survival of barbarism, . . . mere perpetuation of slavery under new names against which the reason and moral

Auberon Herbert

sense of the civilized world have to be called into rebellion." Also, throughout the 1890s Herbert engaged in published debates with such noted contemporary Socialists as Belfort Bax, J.A. Hobson and Grant Allen. Herbert embarked upon the publication of *Free Life* despite Spencer's concern that Herbert's opposition to taxation would bring his other views (the ones shared by Spencer) into disrepute. Spencer was wrong, however, if he thought that, for Herbert, taxation was just another issue. Herbert's stand on taxation was motivated by more than his deep commitment to general principles and consistency. For one thing, he argued, compulsory taxation crucially marked the difference between the State-Socialist and the true Individualist.

> I deny that A and B can go to C and force him to form a State and extract from him certain payments and services in the name of such State; and I go on to maintain that if you act in this manner, you at once justify State-Socialism. The only difference between the tax-compelling Individualist and the State-Socialist is that whilst they both have vested ownership of C in A and B, the tax-compelling Individualist proposes to use the powers of ownership in a very limited fashion, the Socialist in a very complete fashion.

Herbert added, "I object to the ownership in any fashion."

For Herbert, the power to levy taxes was the "stronghold" which must be "levelled to the ground." For, "There can be no true condition of rest in society, there can be no perfect friendliness amongst men who differ in opinions, as long as either you or I can use our neighbor and his resources for the furtherance of our ideas and against his own." It is compulsory taxation, he insisted, which generates the corrupt and aggressive game of politics and which in its ultimate expression,

> gives great and undue facility for engaging a whole nation in war. If it were necessary to raise the sum required from those who

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individually agreed in the necessity of war, we should have the strongest guarantee for the preservation of peace. . . . Compulsory taxation means everywhere the persistent probability of a war made by the ambitions or passions of politicians.

As one might expect, and as Spencer fearfully anticipated, Herbert's abolitionism and his continual attack on involuntary taxation led to his being labelled an anarchist. This "charge" came from idiots, from informed advocates of State Socialism, from advocates of limited (but tax-funded) government, and from anarchists. In the last instance, Benjamin Tucker always insisted that, despite himself and to his credit, Auberon Herbert was a true anarchist. Upon hearing of Herbert's death, Tucker wrote, "Auberon Herbert is dead. He was a true Anarchist in everything but name. How much better (and how much rarer) to be an Anarchist in everything but name than to be an Anarchist in name only."

Herbert's superb essay of 1894, "The Ethics of Dynamite," can be seen as a response to the idiotic charge that he was an anarchist of the terrorist sort. Here Herbert argued that as an enemy of government, he was the greatest enemy of dynamite. For "dynamite is not opposed to government; it is, on the contrary, government in its most intensified and concentrated form." Dynamite is just the most recent development in the art of governing people. Herbert even went so far as to suggest a special explanation for the revulsion that the defenders of the State have for the dynamiter.

Deep down in their consciousness lurks a dim perception of the truth, that between him and them exists an unrecognized blood-relationship, that the thing of which they have such a horror is something more than a satire, an exaggeration, a caricature of themselves, that, if the truth is to be fairly acknowledged, it is their very own child, both the product of and the reaction against the methods of "governing" men and women, which they have employed with so unsparing a hand.

Important as it was for Herbert to repudiate any alleged association with the dynamiter, he insisted that the dynamiter's *enemy* was the primary source of his evil. Ideologically, it was the justification of the coercive State, of force and domination, which provided the philosophical basis for the dynamiter. And, materially, it was the crushing "great official machines" of Statehood which produced the impassioned dynamiter.

What of the "charge" that Herbert was an anarchist of what he himself labeled the "reasonable" sort? In the passage directed against the tax-compelling "individualist" we have already seen that Herbert believed individuals should be free to withhold support from any institution —even any institution designed to protect rights. Yet Herbert insisted, against the informed commentators, that he was not an anarchist. For he thought that all people in a given territory would freely converge on a single institution as their means of protecting their common rights. Indeed, he thought that since a single agency would best protect rights, each individual had "strong minor moral reasons" for supporting this common Voluntary State. Benjamin Tucker denied that such a common agency would be a genuine State. But Herbert, for whom the admission of defensive force was always the crucial and controversial step, maintained that Tucker himself, and anyone who allowed the defensive use of force, was an advocate of government. In Herbert's eyes, Tucker and Spooner simply advocated "scattered" or "fragmented" government. Crucially absent at this point in the dispute was any well-developed conception of a competitive market among rights-protecting enterprises. Such a conception would have explained why and how the business of rights protection would best be "fragmented." And often the Herbert-Tucker debate on anarchism slipped, without either party fully realizing it, over into a debate about the basis for legitimate property rights. Here errors flowing from Tucker's acceptance of a labor theory of value were matched by Herbert's too ready acceptance of the legitimacy of current land holdings.

In the final year of his life, Herbert composed two of his greatest essays, "Mr. Spencer and the Great Machine" and "A Plea for Voluntaryism." Both of these essays are studies of power, "that evil, bitter, mocking thing . . . the curse and sorrow of the world" and of its degenerating effects on the individual and society. Echoing Spencer's distinction between the industrial and military modes of co-ordination, Herbert elaborated on the radical difference between "the way of peace and co-operation" and "the way of force and strife." He focused on the inherent dynamic of political power, the ways in which the great game of power politics captures its participants no matter what their initial intentions. He argued that no man's integrity or moral or intellectual selfhood can withstand his embrace of the soul-consuming machine. Even the individual who appears to win in his battle for power, he argued, is the worse for it. For, "From the moment you possess power, you are but its slave, fast bound by its many tyrant necessities." And the growth of the great machine means an end to progress. For progress is the work of diverse individuals, of "a great number of small changes and adaptations, and experiments . . . each carried out by those who have strong beliefs and clear perceptions of their own." And this true experimentation disappears under "universal systems." Against such systems Herbert championed always and above all else the self-governed and unique individual.

We have as individuals to be above every system in which we take our place, not beneath it, not under its feet, and at its mercy; to use it, and not be used by it: and that can only be when we cease to be bubbles, cease to leave the direction of ourselves to the crowd—whatever crowd it is—social, religious, or political —in which we so often allow our better selves to be submerged.

Eric Mack, professor of philosophy at Tulane University, has written extensively on philosophical themes related to libertarianism. He recently edited a collection of ten Auberon Herbert essays entitled *The Right and Wrong of Compulsion by the State and Other Essays*, published by Liberty Press.

COMING NEXT MONTH

Tom Hazlett on Jerry Brown
Ralph Raico on Irving Howe's Leon Trotsky
Jack Shafer on the Market for Spies

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IN PRAISE OF DECADENCE

JEFF RIGGENBACH

The year is new; the decade is nearly spent. And commentators of every political and cultural persuasion are scrambling to characterize, even to pigeonhole the '70s. Ben Wattenberg of the conservative American Enterprise Institute has rushed to inform the readers of the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and his own bi-monthly magazine, *Public Opinion*, that the '70s is best characterized as a "great backlash against the sensibility of the 1960s", as a "move to the right" by Americans opposed to the "eroding moral standards", the monetary inflation, and the international slip in status the United States has learned to live with in the past decade.

For Wattenberg, all these evils may be laid at the feet of "the sensibility of the 1960s", though he is careful never to be too intelligible about what exactly that sensibility was or exactly how it has led us to eroded moral standards, eroded money, and eroded world status. Perhaps his is a studied unintelligibility: perhaps Wattenberg, like Oscar Wilde's Lord Darlington, is afraid that "now-a-days to be intelligible is to be found out."

For, to take up Wattenberg's catalogue of evils in the reverse of the order in which he presented it, the international status of the United States has *not* deteriorated in the past decade—at least, as that status is reflected in our prestige abroad. From the years of the Vietnam war, when the U.S. government was despised all over the globe, there has been nothing but dramatic *improvement* in U.S. status abroad. And while inflation is undeniably real and rapacious, it is extraordinarily difficult to see in what way it proceeds from "the sensibility of the 1960s". It proceeds, in fact, from one thing and one thing only: from U.S. government tampering with the money supply. And whatever the new leftists and counterculturists of the 1960s may have advocated in their not infrequent moments of political madness, they never advocated tampering with the money supply. It wasn't their kind of issue. Nor is it associated with them.

Their kind of issue has been typified, and not without justice, as the "personal freedom" issue: the freedom to smoke marijuana, to obtain an abortion, to refuse the slavery of military "service", to rear children without the interference of either the medical establishment or the public schools. For Wattenberg, presumably, the choice to do any or all of these things is evidence of "eroding moral standards"—but that is not how the majority of Americans sees the issue. Marijuana draws closer by the day to the legal-but-regulated status now enjoyed by the favored drugs of Wattenberg's generation, alcohol and tobacco. "Abortion-on-demand" has lost both its legal and its social stigma. The draft is gone, and efforts to resurrect it have, so far, failed. Home birth and midwifery have become almost *de rigueur* among middle class suburbanites, as have private schools. Far from joining a "backlash" against the "eroding moral standards" of the '60s, Americans are enthusiastically embracing those eroded standards: smoking pot, aborting their unwanted

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pregnancies, having their babies at home, sending their kids to private schools, dismissing from their minds all the prattle they hear from commentators like Wattenberg about the moral crisis posed by homosexuality and pornography, deciding to devote their energies instead to pleasing, even indulging, *themselves*.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the cultural importance of this phenomenon, but is easily possible to misapprehend and misname it, whatever your politics. Thus Wattenberg looks straight at all this culturally acceptable self-indulgence and calls it a "conservative backlash" against the ethos of the '60s. And Henry Fairlie ventures a remarkably similar analysis in the pages of the liberal *New Republic*, under the title "A Decade of Reaction". Fairlie too sees the conservative opinion maker as the natural leader of the '70s, but he reveals in his closing paragraphs that he uses the word "conservative" in what can only be called a Pickwickian sense. "We are being led by the conservative intellectuals," he writes, "into the garden of weeds and nettles that Ayn Rand helped to prepare for us. If that seems too vulgar, it must be said that one of the key conservative works of the 1970s, Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, is no less vulgar in a radical libertarianism, as we are asked to consider it, that is really nothing but a self-indulgent permissiveness—which any true conservative should resist by instinct—speciously given the dignity of a moral system."

Murray Rothbard has argued that traditional liberals and traditional conservatives are gradualy becoming indistinguishable and have even, in some cases, begun explicitly proposing a merger of forces to do battle with a new enemy called "permissiveness". Here, it would seem, is one of those explicit calls for a merger. Both the liberal and the conservative recoil in horror from the moral degeneration they see around them in our culture. And both locate the origins of the problem in the cultural upheavals of the 1960s.

The '60s, to Fairlie, was a decade of "general social concerns", a decade in which "social and not personal questions" dominated public discussion and debate—dominated even the bestseller lists. And, as Fairlie sees it, all this gave way to the hedonistic, self-centered culture of the '70s only after a massive betrayal.

> Standing at the end of the 1970s, our instinct is to ask why the apparently furious social protests of the 1960s led to the new sensibility, to the in-turning of the self. But our question is wrongly put. Much of the social protest of the 1960s was primarily that of personal theater, which only seemed to have a public concern because it took place on the streets. This was most obviously true of the Yippies, such as Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, but it was no less true of someone such as H. Bruce Franklin of Stanford who, as late as the early 1970s, was still being presented to us a revolutionary martyr, although his "revolutionary Marxism" was, to all who heard him, the merest fig leaf for his self-indulgent theater, What could be seen only by some in the 1960s, but is now clear to all but a few, is that the new left was, from its beginning to its end, in a self-destructive alliance with the counterculture, and that the counterculture swallowed up the new left. If it had been seriously political at all, the new left would have fought the counterculture tooth and nail. It would have cut all connections with the hip and the junky. It would have had nothing to do with those who saw all society as the enemy of the individual, a posturizing that was soon extended to the belief that all *reality* is the enemy of the individual. When we listen today to Tom Hayden's account of his one-time associates—"Jerry Rubin continues his quest for a therapeutic revolution. . . . Abbie Hoffman has literally dropped out, since he's forced to live as a fugitive to avoid a long jail sentence on an old drug charge. . . . Rennie Davis has dropped political activism—and that to undertake a spiritual life. . ."—we are listening to a self-serving mythologizing of one of the great poltical betrayals of all time.

So here we have it: a leading conservative hailing the '70s as the decade of long-awaited backlash against the moral turpitude of the 1960s; and a prominent liberal damning the '70s as the decade in which the promise of the '60s—the furious devotion to social issues—collapsed into a singleminded devotion to the personal, to the self. To make sense of the '70s, it would seem, we must first make sense of the '60s.

The meaning of the sixties

Like Fairlie, Carl Oglesby, who presided over Students for a Democratic Society in 1965-1966, conceives the '60s as the work of two distinct groups: the new left and the counterculture—or, as he calls it, "the hip culture". But unlike Fairlie, Oglesby approaches his subject matter with first hand knowledge. And his account of the relationship between the two groups is accordingly more realistic. "The difference between the hip scene and the New Left movement," he writes,

> was something the activists were constantly aware of. How could it have been otherwise? The hip thing was fundamentally a mass introspection, a drug-boosted look in. The New Left, on the other hand, went out to the world from a set of shared moral precepts about race, war, and imperialism; it was a recreating of a private moral judgment as a public political act. Of course, the normal hippie's every instinct indisposed him to war and made him wholly eager to demonstrate this, provided that someone else set the stage. But he was satisfied to act without strategic thought, without any sense of political plan, except that the more people there were who smoked grass, the better off the country would be.

Earlier in the same essay ("The World Before Watergate", *Inquiry*, May 29, 1978), Oglesby identified the "core idea" of the new left as the idea

> that the United States and USSR were in a process of "convergence": Russian Comunism and American capitalism were coming to mean much the same thing. Both systems had been badly tarnished in the Cold War struggles and had lost their former ideal purity and moral simplicity. Therefore (ran the early New Left argument), true progressives, classical liberrals, humanistic revolutionaries, and libertarians needed to strike out beyond received liberalism and dogmatic Marxism in search of new comprehensions, a new sense of politics, and a new general project for the left.

It seems noteworthy to me that this description of the cultural and ideological underpinnings of the new left contains not a single reference to the economic issues commonly associated with the left in general. The students were not out in the streets during the '60s demanding that factories be turned over to the workers or that the poor of America be given a guaranteed annual income or that medicine be socialized. Instead they were demanding an end to war and the roots of war—U.S. imperialism—and an end to institutionalized, governmentally mandated racism and sexism. And their reasons for issuing these demands were largely personal and individual—as Oglesby suggests when he calls the new left a "recreating of a private moral judgment as a public political act." Those of us who were college students during the turbulent '60s opposed the war in Vietnam and the U.S. foreign policy of global interventionism and imperialism because we were individually appalled at the prospect of being ordered by the leading government of the "free world" to murder other human beings whom we did not know and with whom we had no quarrel, and to act as standing targets for those other, equally armed and dangerous, human beings. We opposed the officially sanctioned racism and sexism of the period because we believed

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that each human being was, like ourselves, a unique individual, and was entitled to be regarded and approached as such, rather than as an anonymous member of a group which had arbitrarily been awarded second class social status on the basis of irrational prejudice. We opposed laws against marijuana because we didn't want to get busted for smoking a little grass. We opposed government efforts to silence dissent and impose conformity because we didn't want to get busted for saying what we thought. We were not so much new leftists, perhaps, as new individualists.

This is certainly the conclusion to which one is drawn, at any rate, upon learning from Carl Oglesby that fully two of the four constituencies represented by the original new left were classical liberals and libertarians, both of whom adopt a very un-leftwing approach to economic issues by insisting on absolute protection of individual rights. It is also the conclusion toward which another survivior of the '60s, Jim Hougan, has argued, in his recent book, *Decadence* (William Morrow, 1975). In Hougan's mind, the counterculture was the central significant fact of the '60s. But it was a shapeless, undefined, and possibly undefinable fact. It was "a loose agglomeration of sects, systems, and disengaged youths who didn't have enough in common to constitute a 'movement' in any meaningful sense of the word. What the counterculture shared with itself was a set of rejections, a preoccupation with consciousness, a belief in exemplary action, and the certainty that the planet's fate rested upon the shoulders of the young."

Loose as this agglomeration was, Hougan argues, it posed a genuine threat to things as they were. It held within itself the potential of a genuine revolutionary movement—but a *cultural* movement, not a strictly political one, and certainly not one devoted to achieving the program of the new left. "Its alliance with the New Left was mostly fictitious," Hougan writes, "a combination of cultural expedience and political propaganda." In fact,

> if one is inclined toward conspiracy theories, it may be tempting to believe that the answer to the question—Why are we in Vietnam?—is that our presence there offered an irrelevant Left the fulcrum needed to co-opt a truly dangerous mass phenomenon. (As with all conspiracy theories, this one wildly overestimates the perception and chutzpah of the bad guys.) Certainly, in the absence of the Vietnam diversion, the anti-authoritarian young would not have tolerated the rhetoric, puritanism, materialism, centralism, or totalitarian style of the Left.

In effect, the Left was the only political element of any importance in American society which opposed the Vietnamese war, and so, by default, found itself in a position to take over intellectual leadership of a mass movement which was actually much more broady based. "Exploiting Vietnam as an opportunity for recruitment," Hougan writes, "the Left sought to co-opt the counterculture, to reforge the latter's cultural discontents into the political framework ordained by Marx a century earlier. It was an awkward, painful fit." Moreover, "in the arrogant takeovers of underground newspapers, in the 'politicization' of cultural insitutions such as food co-ops, and in the Leninists' blatant subversion of organizations such as SDS, the Marxist Left demonstrated its appalling bad faith and dogmatism."

If the picture of the '60s, the new left, and the counterculture painted by Oglesby and Hougan is an accuarate one (and it jibes far better with my own memory of the decade than do the caricatures of Ben Wattenberg and Henry Fairlie), then the true meaning of the '60s, culturally speaking, is a kind of individualism. The loose agglomeration of disaffected, anti-authoritarian young people which came to be called the counterculture was unified by its opposition to authority, its belief in the fundamental importance of freedom and dignity for the individual, its devotion to the idea of consciousness (along with the various methods and substances used in altering it and the various theories and therapeutic techniques used in adapting it to the rigors of living), its idealism, and its belief in itself as a generation. Those among the young who were politically inclined quickly recognized the threat posed to the individual in this country by the U.S. government, and began vigorously opposing the most blatant of its oppressive acts: the mass murder in Vietnam, the drug laws and repression of dissent at home, the institutionalization of racial and sexual discrimination. Recognizing an opportunity when it saw one (and genuinely sympathizing with most of the positions it was co-opting), the forces of the left moved in—and were, for the most part, welcomed. After all, what other American political organizations were actively seeking to join the young in their cause? They were told that their causes were leftwing causes, and they believed it. They were told that they were the new left, and they called themselves the new left, and they came to be called the new left.

But the fact is, as we have seen, that they were not, most of them, leftists at all. So, inevitably, they parted company with their leftist mentors and fellow-travellers. And when they did, how the howling began! Henry Fairlie's already quoted complaint is fairly typical: "If the new left had been seriously political at all, it would have had nothing to do with those who saw all society as the enemy of the individual, a posturizing that was soon extended to the belief that all *reality* is the enemy of the individual."

This comes, remember, from the same writer who considers libertarianism "self-indulgent permissiveness speciously given the dignity of a moral system." And it is fairly typical of leftist responses to what has happened to the counterculture since the '60s, since the end of the draft and the end of the war ended its need, if ever there had been one, for an alliance with the left. As description it is wholly inadequate. Does Fairlie really believe that the young people of the '60s began by believing that all society is the enemy of the individual and now believe that all reality is the enemy of the individual? Where has he been?

Perhaps he's been inhabiting the same hideaway as Susan Stern, who writes for *Seven Days* and *In These Times,* and who announces in the Christmas 1978 issue of *Inquiry* that a group of families "could not be described as 'hippies' or members of the 'counterculture' " because most of them "were supported by gainfully employed fathers and lived in single-family dwellings with one or two cars in the garage." How do Fairlie and Stern think all those millions of young members of the counterculture have been staying alive all these years? By collecting welfare and food stamps? By being supported by their parents? Or do they think all the flower children have literally died out and we have somehow failed to notice the dramatic loss in population?

The fact is, the campus radicals of the 1960s, who never really became devoted to the Marxist economics their leftwing comrades were peddling but who found it plausible enough and palatable enough, have spent the last few years learning hard practical lessons in the economics of the real world. They've been out here in the marketplace, finding out first hand about inflation, govenrment regulation of business, and the laws of supply and demand which they used to comprehend in terms of "exploited labor" and "greedy capitalists". A growing number of the retail merchants, restaurateurs, doctors, lawyers, journalists and business-

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people of today are the flower children and campus radicals of yesterday:

Allen is a paramedic and lab technician at one of the largest and most modern hospitals in metropolitan Los Angeles. He earns a little extra money by growing and selling marijuana. He lives, with his wife and three children, in a three bedroom ranch style house in a suburban middle class neighborhood. He meditates daily, eats no meat, burns incense in every room of his home and also in his car, and decorates his walls with psychedelic and Indian posters. Twelve years ago, when he was at City College, Allen was a"new left" radical. Today when he gets involved in political conversations, he's fond of turning his friends on to a film he saw on public television, "The Incredible Bread Machine," which presents the case for a free market.

To the north, in Berkeley, Greg, Jim and Jerry are finding out first hand what it's like to be a businessman, an entrepreneur, a capitalist. Ten years ago, Greg was telling hundreds of students at an anti-war rally in Houston's Hermann Park that they ought to tear down the buildings of nearby Rice University "brick by brick". Today he owns and operates a successful "alternative news service" for radio stations. Ten years ago, Jim and Jerry were writing and distributing radical literature, occupying buildings, issuing demands. Today they're in partnership in the solar energy business. Jerry and his wife have two kids and a station wagon, and one of their favorite topics of conversation is the difficulty you have finding decent schools.

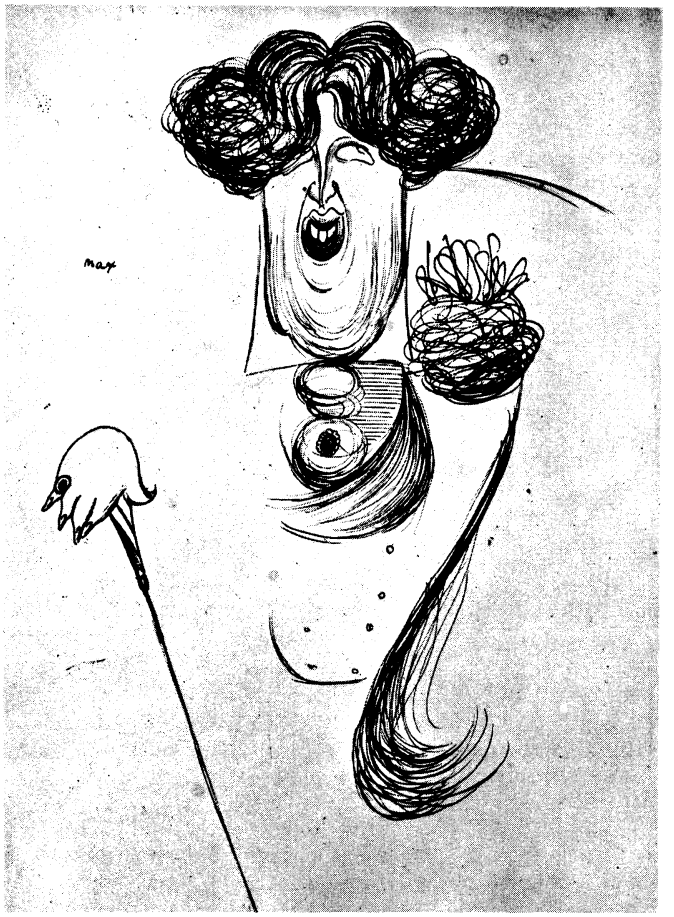
Dave was a staff writer for the Los Angeles Free Press ten years ago, a regular on one of America's largest and most influential underground papers. Today he's an up and coming realtor with a home in the Hollywood hills.

Dennis is a street artist. You can find him most Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays along the San Francisco waterfront peddling his handmade leather goods. His wife Rina is a registered nurse, who also teaches natural childbirth classes for extra money. They live, with their two children, in a $150,000 house in Piedmont, one of the most fashionable addresses in the San Francisco Bay area. They buy all their groceries at health food stores. In November of 1978, they voted for Ed Clark, the Libertarian Party candidate for Governor of California.

None of these people (and there are hundreds of thousands of others like them) has abandoned his old countercultural habits of thought. All of them are finding themselves more in agreement than ever with their original commitment to peace and individual freedom, but newly skeptical of their original notions about the role of government in promoting "economic justice" as they once called it —and increasingly skeptical, therefore, of the role of government period.

"The electorate is skeptical," writes U.C. Berkeley political science professor Jacob Citrin in the premier issue of a new magazine called *Taxing and Spending*, "if not wholly contemptuous, of government's ability to solve the nation's problems." He cites figures from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research showing that nearly 75 percent of the electorate believe "the government wastes a lot of tax money"; 60 percent believe "the government in Washington can be trusted to do what is right only some of the time"; 50 percent believe "public officials don't care much what people think"; and 45 percent believe "the people running the government don't know what they are doing."

And these attitudes are, of course, turning up at the polls. CBS news reported on January 14 that slightly less than 50 percent of those eligible to vote in the November 1978 elections had bothered to go to the polls. According to a Census Bureau spokesman, these non-voters could not properly be described as apathetic; rather, he said, they were politically alienated—increasingly uncertain that voting changed anything or could change anything, that elections were anything more than a fraud or a charade. Moreover, the Census Bureau told CBS, it was likely that even more Americans are staying away from the polls than the figures would seem to suggest, since it's widely known that many people lie when asked if they voted in the last election.



Oscar Wilde by Max Beerbohm

Possible confirmation of that last gloomy speculation came early in February, when the British magazine, *The Economist,* released its privately conducted survey of participation in the November 1978 elections. *The Economist* found that only 37 percent of the electorate had bothered to vote.

And it is almost certain that one of the largest factors in the growth of this non-voting, politically alienated segment of the electorate is the progressively more important role the generation of the '60s is playing in the public life of the nation. As Jim Hougan puts it, the flower children of the '60s are now in the adolescence of their middle age. They are on the verge of becoming the establishment. *And more of them are flower children today than were flower children in the '60s*—if by "flower children" we mean advocates of the countercultural values of peace, freedom, consciousness, and youth. Madison Avenue has seen to it that these values have been spread through the culture and made acceptable, in some cases, even to those who despised them at the time they were new.

"Counterculture and women's liberation are classic ex-

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amples of movements 'processed' by the Avenue," Hougan writes.

> The most strategic ideological battles took place. . . in the suites of Avenue account execs, in the minds of copywriters, on television, and on the advertising pages of the nation's magazines.
> It was there that America accomodated itself to the new ideas or rejected them. What made those ideas virtually impossible to ignore was the economic strength which the young possessed and, just as important, the attention they commanded from their envious elders. In co-opting the young and the women's movement, the Avenue exercised its usual care for the stability of the social boat, going to extraordinary lengths in its efforts to separate the movements' styles, slogans, symbols, heroes, and catchwords from their essences and contents.

Thus were we treated, during the '60s, to pitches for Angel Face makeup, "for the natural look"; Right Guard's new "natural scent" anti-perspirant; the Powers modeling school's "liberating" modeling course; Ma Griffe perfume for the liberated woman; "New Generation" shoes from Hush Puppies; "Female Chauvinist" shirts from Ultressa; and the list goes on and on. "The young's reaction was predictable," Hougan writes.

> They complained about "cultural exploitation" and co-optation, but saw little that they could do about it. What they didn't seem to understand, however, was that co-optation works both ways. The Avenue co-opted the symbols and rhetoric of the young in order to sell their clients' products but, in doing so, it also sold the thing which it'd co-opted. Advertisements for Angel Face, Dep, Jim Beam, Levis, Ma Griffe, H.I.S., Hertz, and Right Guard hawked the values of the counterculture and women's lib even as they touted makeup, hair conditioner, bourbon, pants, deoderants, and perfume. Women's liberation became exactly as acceptable as Ma Griffe, and equally chic. It doesn't matter that industry's endorsement of the movement was mercenary and ripe with hypocrisy. What counted was the effect of that endorsement: women who were ambivalent or skeptical about the movement understood, at least subliminally, that its values were literally "in *Vogue*." Not to accept those values, or to neglect the rhetoric, was tantamount to being "lame," unattractive, and cloddish. Ma Griffe spoke to the fashionable young women of America, and pronounced them "liberated"; in doing so, the perfume makers struck a greater blow for the women's movement than all the books about *Vaginal Politics* and all the "consciousness-raising sessions" held to date.

One may question Hougan's assertion that "industry's endorsement of the movement was mercenary and ripe with hypocrisy." Samuel Brittan, in his recent book, *Capitalism and the Permissive Society*, writes that "the values of competitive capitalism have a great deal in common with contemporary attitudes, and in particular with radical attitudes. Above all they share a similar stress on allowing people to do, to the maximum feasible extent, what they feel inclined to do rather than conform to the wishes of authority, custom or convention."

Of course, as Brittan reminds us, "*competitive* capitalism is far from being the sole or dominating force of our society. . . But to the extent that it prevails, competitive capitalism is the biggest single force acting on the side of what is fashionable to call 'permissiveness', but what was once known as personal liberty."

This is certainly, as we have seen, what happened in the United States during the '60s. Through the medium of advertising, capitalists helped to spread and legitimize the values of the counterculture—values, which, as we have seen, are more properly regarded as individualistic and libertarian, than as collectivist and leftist. As Brittan puts it, "the basic arguments for the so-called 'permissive' morality were developed by thinkers in the 19th-century liberal tradition from John Stuart Mill onwards. . .. Many of the classical ideas of 19th-century liberalism did not come on the statute book until the 1960s. The battle is still far from won, as can be seen from the sentences still passed on 'obscene publications' or the hysterical and vindictive attitude adopted by so many authority figures towards the problem of drugs." And again: "the contemporary New Left—and even more the less overtly political 'youth culture'—is both hedonistic and suspicious of authority. It is the end road of the libertarian and utilitarian ideals professed by the bewigged philosophers of the 18th century and Victorian political thinkers in their frock coats."

Similarly, Murray N. Rothbard has described the new left (in "Liberty and the New Left", *Left and Right*, Autumn 1965, pp. 35-67) as "a striking and splendid infusion of libertarianism into the ranks of the Left." In the same piece, he approvingly quotes a student activist who argues that the new left has "taken up a 'right wing' cause which the avowed conservatives have dropped in favor of defending corporations and hunting Communists. This is the cause of the individual against the world."

The cause of the individual. Hedonism. Suspicion of authority. The meaning and true legacy of the '60s. And what then of the '70s? Thanks to the power of advertising, and to the power of an idea whose time has come, the whole country is now moving to the beat of the ghostly drummer who set the rhythm for the flower children and campus radicals of a decade and more ago. And we are plunged full tilt into decadence.

The decay of authority

The word "decadence" has been much used of late in descriptions of our cultural milieu. Jim Hougan called the '70s decadent back in 1975, but neglected, in a 250-page discussion filled with useful insights, to offer a straightforward, clear definition of the term. *New Times* magazine devoted its farewell issue, the issue of January 8, 1979, to an analysis of how and why the culture of the '70s was decadent. The cover depicted a bound and helpless Uncle Sam lying ignominiously on the floor; above him, with one foot on his midriff, stood a beautiful, scantily clad young woman, brandishing a whip. "Decadence," said the cover, "The People's Choice." But the fifty-odd pages of text shed little more light on exactly what decadence *was* than Hougan had. One emerged from reading them with the vague feeling that decadence meant having a good time, or perhaps that it meant looking for thrills, living the life of a libertine, engaging in extravagant self-indulgence.

This is also the feeling about decadence one gets from reading Hougan. In his closest stab at a definition, he writes that "its edges are defined by a preoccupation with the senses, an affection for the moment, and an insistence upon the supremacy or inconsequentiality of an individual's existence or acts. Decadence takes place at the extremity of self-indulgence, but it is seldom, if ever, marred by self-importance."

Russell Kirk, in his newly published *Decadence and Renewal in the Higher Learning*, invokes the shade of C.E.M. Joad, whose 1948 treatise, *Decadence: A Philosophical Inquiry* characterized decadence as "a preoccupation with the self and its experiences, promoted by and promoting the subjectivist analysis of moral, aesthetic, metaphysical, and theological judgments." His fellow academic (and political opposite), Christopher Lasch, in his newly published *The Culture of Narcissism*, invokes the spirit (and an echo of the

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terminology) of Marx: "This book," he writes in his preface, "describes a way of life that is dying—the culture of competitive individualism, which in its decadence has carried the logic of individualism to the extreme of a war of all against all, the pursuit of happiness to the dead end of a narcissistic preoccupation with the self."

The one characteristic of decadence which all these commentators—Lasch, Kirk, *New Times*, Jim Hougan—seem to agree upon is selfishness: self-indulgence, self-preoccupation. "To live for the moment is the prevailing passion," Lasch writes, "—to live for yourself, not for your predecessors or posterity." Or, he might have added, for your contemporaries. The '60s admonition to "do your own thing" has become the one remaining cultural norm of the 1970s. And doing your own thing entails deciding in your own mind what your own thing is and making your decision according to your own standards, not the ones you've been taught by various authorities—church, school, family—that it's mandatory you respect.

Russell Kirk grasps this issue better than most other contemporary commentators, and quite accurately traces the origins of our present period of decadence to the college campus of the early 1960s, where authority first began seriously to decay. "Why should we believe anything or do anything?" Kirk asks rhetorically. "On what authority?"

> That question, although put into words by few students during 1961, lay uncomfortably just below the daily consciousness of many of them. In every generation, among every people, the young who are about to enter upon independence make some such inquiry. Ordinarily answers are given, whether or not these replies are wholly satisfactory, and the young accept the answers, if grudgingly. Authority is pointed out to them, and in general they submit.
>
> But the liberal democratic age after the Second World War, in America and western Europe, seemed to provide no answer to the question "on what authority?"—or at least no answer that satisfied the restless and uncertain rising generation. . . . Once upon a time, a bishop or a famous preacher had been an authority; an eminent public man or a strong-minded general had been an authority; great books had been authorities; a university president or a confident learned professor had been an authority; a parent had been an authority. And above all these authorities, in the old culture of which American society in 1961 was a continuation, had stood the authority of God, as expressed through the Bible or the church's tradition.
>
> But these old authorities were enfeebled by 1961, or had even repudiated themselves.

And well they should have. For the generation that came of age in the '60s and inquired then as to why they should believe anything or do anything found that the authority of previous generations was a sorry spectacle indeed. God was a fiction; his representatives on earth, the bishops and famous preachers, were con-men who enriched themselves and their churches at the expense of their mostly poverty-stricken "flocks"; our public men and our generals had lied us into imperialism and mass murder around the globe, the Vietnam war being only the grossest of many examples; university presidents like Clark Kerr of the University of California were telling their students in so many words that the function of their schools was to service State capitalism by supplying it with its experts and technicians, and by training students to accept, even to welcome, the "new slavery" of working for the bureaucrats of the Corporate State.

And the more closely the young of the early 1960s examined these authorities, the worse they looked. Not only had they lied us into war; they had lied us into massive expenditures to stamp out a drug menace which had turned out, on examination, to be no menace at all; and they had lied us into believing we lived in a society of equality of opportunity, when in fact one could be barred from advancement by force of law if one belonged to the wrong sex or race.

H. L. Mencken in 1924 by William Gropper

Naturally, the young rejected these authorities—rejected them outright. And in so doing, they posed their own revolutionary answer to the questions of why they should believe anything or do anything, and on what authority. They answered that each person must be his own authority and must "do his own thing". And a generation destined by its elders to become a cohesive society split up into its component individuals.

"The word 'decadence'," wrote the French novelist and essayist Paul Bourget in 1883,

> denotes a state of society which produces too great a number of individuals unfit for the labours of common life. A society ought to be assimilated to an organism. As an organism, in fact, it resolves itself into a federation of lesser organisms, which again resolve themselves into a federation of cells. The individual is the social cell. In order that the whole organism should function with energy, it is necessary that the component organisms should function with energy, but with a subordinate energy. And in order that these inferior organisms should themselves function with energy, it is necessary that their component cells should function with energy, but with a subordinate energy. If the energy of the cells becomes independent, the organisms composing the total organism cease likewise to subordinate their energy to the total energy, and the anarchy which takes place constitutes the decadence of the whole.

And the fact is that in every major period of cultural decadence, libertarian ideas—including the idea of anarchy—have been among the most discussed and written about. The period with which the concept of decadence is most commonly associated, the 1890s and the turn-of-the-century or *fin de siecle* years generally, must surely mark an

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all time low for the standing of the State among intellectuals and the young.

Oscar Wilde, that living emblem of the '90s, did his best to disregard all governments. When he passed through customs on his way into the U.S. and was asked what he had to declare, he replied that he had nothing to declare but his genius. He is said once to have told a disgruntled tax collector that he would not pay his long-delinquent property tax, though he was, as the government alleged, the householder, and did, as the government alleged, live there and sleep there; because, as he explained it, he slept so badly. In his famous essay, "The Soul of Man Under Socialism", he wrote:

> Every man must be left quite free to choose his own work. No form of compulsion must be exercised over him. If there is, his work will not be good for him, will not be good in itself, and will not be good for others. And by work I simply mean activity of any kind.
>
> All associations must be quite voluntary. It is only in voluntary associations that man is fine.
>
> . . . there is no necessity to separate the monarch from the mob; all authority is equally bad.
>
> There are three kinds of despots. There is the despot who tyrannizes over the body. There is the despot who tyrannizes over the soul. There is the despot who tyrannizes over the soul and body alike. The first is called the Prince. The second is called the Pope. The third is called the People.

The turn of the century saw the literary resurrection of the individualist Max Stirner—a biography by John Henry Mackay and several new translations of his magnum opus, *The Ego and His Own*, notably the one commissioned by the American libertarian Benjamin R. Tucker and published by him in 1907. Tucker's own individualist journal *Liberty* reached its peak of international circulation and influence in the '90s. And the American critic James Gibbons Huneker, whom H.L. Mencken called "the chief man in the movement of the nineties on this side of the ocean", wrote at that time of Max Stirner as "the frankest thinker of his century" and of *The Ego and His Own* as a "dangerous book . . . dangerous in every sense of the word—to socialism, to politicians, to hypocrisy. It asserts the dignity of the Individual, not his debasement."

Mencken himself, the Great Libertarian, was the most important intellectual influence on the decadent American '20s. He edited *The Smart Set* and *The American Mercury*, the decade's most overtly, outrageously decadent magazines (the rough equivalents, one might say, of *The Yellow Book* the decade's most overtly, outrageously decadent magazines (the rough equivalents, one might say, of *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*, the magazines so closely associated with the '90s in London). He also wrote introductions and helped to select titles for the Modern Library, probably the most culturally significant publishing phenomenon of the '20s. The Modern Library was founded in 1917 by Horace Liveright, who chose Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* as the first title in his new series of inexpensive editions of "classics in the modern spirit", and proceeded in the ensuing eight years, until he sold the firm to Bennett Cerf in 1925, to publish virtually every writer of substantial popularity during the '90s—including Max Stirner, whose *The Ego and His Own* was number 49 in the series. And Modern Library editions were then as paperback thrillers are now—they paid the bills for the publisher. In the eight years Liveright published the Modern Library, it became the financial backbone of his firm and accounted for annual sales of around 300,000 books. The readers who greeted Albert Jay Nock's essay "Anarchist's Progress" on its first appearance in magazine form (and, subsequently in the same decade, in book form) were also unable, apparently, to get enough of the literary and political radicals of three decades before.

And we can feel fairly confident that the literary radicalism was at least as attractive to the readers of the '20s as the political radicalism, that they were responsive not only to the reissue in 1924 of Benjamin R. Tucker's essays, but also to the reissue in 1919 (by the Modern Library, who else?) of the essays of the French critic Remy de Gourmont, who called for "individualism in art". For literary authority was in decay in the '20s as well. On both sides of the Atlantic, imaginative writers were breaking away from conventional ways of writing fiction and poetry. In New York and in Paris, the writers who would become known as the modernists—Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner—were experimenting with narrative technique, with characterization, even with grammar and syntax themselves. In New York and London, the writers who would become known as the "exquisites" or "decadents"—George Jean Nathan, Carl Van Vechten, Elinor Wylie, James Branch Cabell, Ronald Firbank, Logan Pearsall Smith, the Sitwells—were once again practicing a kind of literature which had last been seen in the '90s with Oscar Wilde and Edgar Saltus: a literature of novelty and idiosyncracy, of elaborately crafted style and exotic—even bizarre or fantastic—subject matter; a literature calculated to embody and express the unique individuality of its creator.

We are taught in school these days that the literary '20s in America means Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner. But until the end of the decade, Hemingway and Faulkner were known mainly to the readers of small-circulation avant garde literary magazines; and Fitzgerald was generally regarded, and rightly, as a talented and glib but superficial popular novelist—the John O'Hara or Ross Macdonald of his day. At the time, the writers who were of the new wave, the writers who were the darlings of the media and the young radical contingent of the literary establishment, the writers who were hot, were the writers grouped around H.L. Mencken—especially Cabell, Van Vechten and Nathan. The writers who were hot at the time, in effect, were of the mold of Oscar Wilde: iconoclastic, individualistic, satirical, devoted to perfection of style.

And it is no accident that a strikingly similar group of writers best represents the literary culture of our own decadent time: Kurt Vonnegut, Donald Barthelme, Tom Wolfe, William H. Gass, Ken Kesey. Surely the memory of *Mother Night, Cat's Cradle, The Dead Father, Mauve Gloves and Madmen, Omensetter's Luck*,and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is sufficient to dispel Henry Fairlie's lament that "no previous decade in this century has been so barren of anything . . . in literature to which one might think of attaching the label of greatness." And if it be protested that of anything . . . in literature to which one might think of attaching the label of greatness." And if it be protested that most of the titles just named come not from the '70s but from the '60s, let it be remembered that the '70s is properly understood as a continuation of the '60s. And for that matter, there is no shortage of serious major works in the '70s itself: Wilfrid Sheed's *Max Jamison*, for example, or Ursula K. LeGuin's *Orsinian Tales*, or Samuel R. Delany's *Dhalgren*, which, like Vonnegut's early novels, has been forced to appear first in paperback and establish a massive cult following for itself before being honored with hardcover publication and serious critical notice. And if one takes account of the fact (as Fairlie does not) that the essay is beginning to supplant the novel as the favored prose form for serious lit-

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erary artists in this culture, then the list of important works of the '70s grows even longer: William H. Gass's *On Being Blue* and *The World Within the Word*, Robert Harbison's *Eccentric Spaces*, and Delany's *The Jewel-Hinged Jaw* come immediately to mind.

Contrary to Fairlie's assertion, ours *is* an era of important literary and artistic work. Like every decadent period before it, it is a period of innovation and high craftsmanship in the arts, and of passionate commitment to ideas in all the intellectual spheres. When an individual chooses his ideas for himself, judges them for himself, and does with them what he wishes to do with them, he is much more likely to devote himself to ideas with enthusiasm and dedication than when he is forced to rely on an authority to decide for him what is worth studying and what use should be made of it. To be sure, many of the ideas to which individuals devote themselves are false, and lead only to foolishness. And in decadent periods, when authorities are in decline and the many feel free to violate their precepts, such false ideas often win large followings. The decay of scientific authority has led to renewed popularity for parapsychology, occult studies, and astrology—in the 1890s, in the 1920s, and in our own era. The decay of medical authority has led to renewed popularity for chiropractic and naturopathy—in the '90s, in the '20s, and in our own era. The decline of religious authority has led to the formation of thousands of sects and cults—in all three eras. The decline of moral authority has led, on the one hand, to the "permissiveness" of homosexual chic and porno chic and the "sexual revolution" and the casual, semi-public use of illegal psychoactive drugs; on the other hand, the decay of moral authority has led to development of a pacifist movement and an animal rights movement devoted to principled vegetarianism. When "deprived" of moral authority figures, it seems, some become libertines, others attempt to become saints.

It is particularly ironic, in fact, that the Freudian-Marxist critic Christopher Lasch should portray the current decadence as a period of "war of all against all". The phrase itself is not surprising, of course, except in the context of Lasch's book (*The Culture of Narcissism*), which is otherwise quite free of cliches and slogans. But it is particularly ironic in a period when pacifism is making a comeback to be told that the culture is plunged into civil war. In fact, there is not only a new pacifism on the scene, there is also that *sine qua non* of international peace, a movement for a non-interventionist foreign policy.

A recent *New York Times* poll indicated that "Americans in increasing numbers want a peaceful world, and oppose any United States involvement in foreign crises." And it is clear that they have come to this point of view through the efforts of a variety of opinion makers from all parts of the political spectrum. As Norman Podhoretz has pointed out,

> It would be a great mistake to assume that these people, the new isolationists, are all liberals (or what is nowadays called liberals). Many, or even most, so-called liberals today are indeed isolationists, but so are many "conservatives.". . . we are now witnessing the emergence of a concensus in support of the new isolationism which cuts across party lines and unites a wide variety of otherwise diver-
> emergence of a concensus in support of the new isolationism which cuts across party lines and unites a wide variety of otherwise diver-gent ideological groupings.

Precisely. The anti-war movement of the "new left" during the '60s united a wide variety of ideological stances into a single, individualistic effort. And out of that anti-war movement has grown, not an "isolationist" movement, strictly speaking—there is no serious opposition to economic and

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. by himself (from *Self-Portraits*, **edited by Burt Britton, Random House, 1976**)

cultural exchange with those in other countries—but a *non-interventionist* movement.

Podhoretz sees this movement as dangerous. The April, 1976 article from which the above remarks are quoted was entitled "Making the World Safe for Communism". And the following year, in the pages of *Harper's* magazine, in an essay called "The Culture of Appeasement", he dwelt on the by now predictable parallels between the growth of the contemporary pacifist and non-interventionist movements and the growth of such movements during the '20s and early '30s. Pacifism and non-interventionism led us to the rise of Nazi Germany, Podhoretz announced, and to the Holocaust and to the War. Are we going to learn from that lesson, he asked, or are we not?

A telling question, certainly, and one to which another should be added. Was World War II in fact a consequence of a policy of "appeasement"—that is, a policy of non-intervention in Hitler's efforts to regain German territory which had been unjustly and imprudently seized by the victorious Allied powers under the infamous Treaty of Versailles? Or was it rather a consequence of the British "guarantee", with Roosevelt's assent, of the "territorial integrity" of Poland—that is, of the *failure* to consistently pursue a non-interventionist foreign policy? Since it was Britain and France which declared war on Germany, and not the other way around, might not a foreign policy of non-interventionism, pursued consistently by both Britain and France, have led to Hitler's initial goal of a war between Germany and Russia instead? And might that not have exhausted both totalitarian giants in the process? Growing numbers of historians and foreign policy analysts have suggested precisely this, to wit, that a policy of "appeasement," correctly seen as a non-interventionist policy, and consistently pursued, would not only have averted a second World War, but would also have diminished the chances for development of the strong Soviet state of which Podhoretz is now so frightened. Bruce M. Russett has recently argued that there was *No Clear and Present Danger* to the United States posed by Germany, and Earl C. Ravenal has claimed, in his 1978 book, *Never Again: Learning from America's Foreign Policy Failures*, that the alleged "lesson" of Munich and "appeasement" is not so simple, and can be interpreted in more ways than one. What about *these* perspectives on appeasement and war?

But Lasch's bromide about a war of all against all is absurd not only in its literal sense, but also—and perhaps particularly—in the figurative sense in which it is intended. Not only is the tendency of our decadent culture toward international peace and harmony; it is toward peace and harmony

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at home as well. As Friedrich Hayek has argued, it could not be otherwise. The implementation of the principle of non-coercion can only result in the development of a "spontaneous order", which both accomodates the different plans of millions of individuals to each other and maximizes all their chances for success. It is not decadence, but the authoritarian state, which leads to a war of all against all. It is not the authoritarian state, but decadence, which permits the avid, unmolested pursuit by all of the myriad ideas and ideologies to which they are so passionately committed because they have chosen them themselves.

The significance of California

There is political commitment during periods of decadence too, for all that the detractors of our decade claim otherwise. Christopher Lasch asserts, in his new polemic on *The Culture of Narcissism*, that

> After the political turmoil of the sixties, Americans have retreated to purely personal preoccupations. Having no hope of improving their lives in any of the ways that matter, people have convinced themselves that what matters is psychic self-improvement: getting in touch with their feelings, eating health food, taking lessons in ballet or belly dancing, immersing themselves in the wisdom of the East, jogging, learning how to "relate," overcoming the "fear of pleasure." Harmless in themselves, these pursuits, elevated to a program and wrapped in the rhetoric of authenticity and awareness, signify a retreat from politics and a repudiation of the recent past.

On the contrary! All this decadent behavior is by no means a repudiation of the political ideals of the '60s. Listen to another veteran of the movement discuss the issue—Dave Dellinger, writing in *Seven Days*, December 8, 1978: "When did it become inconsistent with the struggle for a classless society to struggle against personal alienation from our own deepest satisfactions—in work, in personal relations, in art and nature, in the search for understanding of the mysteries of life, death and processes of the universe?" When indeed? The politics of the '60s were always individualistic at root, and not at all opposed in spirit to the ethos of the "Me Decade". As Lasch himself points out, "what looks to political scientists like voter apathy may represent a healthy skepticism about a political system in which public lying has become endemic and routine. A distrust of experts may help to diminish the dependence on experts that has crippled the capacity for self-help."

More important is Lasch's assertion that Americans have "retreated from politics." They have not. But they have adjusted their politics slightly from the 1960s, to better take into account the nature of a society which is coming apart. Former SDS leader turned establishment politician, Tom Hayden puts it in almost exactly that way. "What there is is a coming-apart of society," he told the *Los Angeles Times* in December. "And it's most extreme," he added, "in California."

California is in fact where the decadence is the most far gone, and therefore where the politics of the '60s have adjusted most completely to the '70s—retaining their basic character, but modifying their outward appearance.

The radicals of the '60s learned an important political lesson even before they learned the economic lessons of entering the economy of the '70s. They learned that the system is set up to screw you; that the Right is in on it and the Left is in on it; and that neither of them is to be trusted. They learned that most elections are farces. So they started registering as independents, rather than as Republicans or Democrats. They started staying away from some elections entirely, and voting in others only on the issues, not on the candidates.

Examples? In California, Proposition 13 has been overwhelmingly approved, and the Briggs initiative which would have removed homosexual teachers from the public schools has gone down to ignominious defeat—and in each case, voter turnout for the ballot propositions was much higher than for the elective races on the same ballots. The world has been put on notice that Californians welcome diversity but will not tolerate greedy government. And, as is usual with California, each of these election outcomes has reverberated far beyond the borders of the state. Proposition 13 has kicked off the major political movement of the '70s, the tax revolt. The defeat of Briggs has given new impetus to the already burgeoning gay rights movement.

And—need it be said?—each of these election outcomes is fairly representative of the decadent, politics of self-interest which characterizes California. It's not hard to see how in the case of Prop 13, but it may be hard in the case of Briggs, at least at first glance. The fact is, though, that *all* the politics in California, Briggs included, fits the self-interested pattern. It was in California, remember, in November of last year, that the Libertarian Party scored the largest vote for a third-party candidate for Governor in more than thirty years. And it was of California that *Politics Today* analyst William Schneider wrote in the last months of 1978 that political causes there

> draw support from those who feel secure about their own values and resentful that the rest of society does not appreciate them. Goldwater and Reagan supporters say, "We live honest, moral, and virtuous lives. Why should we support a government infested with immorality, wastefulness, and disloyalty?" Those on the left say, We practice tolerance and abhor violence. Why should we support a government that oppresses minorities and perpetuates aggression?"

It is worth noting that the values with which these California voters feel so secure are *self-chosen* values in more instances than not. California, gigantic as it is, encompasses mind-taxing diversity. But it is probably fair to say that a larger proportion of those in California are living their lives as *they* see fit—however that may be—than almost anywhere else in the country. And the sense of commitment they develop for these ideas and values they have discovered and implemented in the absence of any authority carries over into their very attitude toward politics. "The left and the right in California are completely opposed in their issue preferences and ideology," Schneider writes,

> but they do share a certain similarity of political sytle. That style is expressive and moralistic: politics is *a contest of values*. It is opposed to the more pragmatic style, namely, politics as *a contest of interests*. Interests can be compromised but values cannot. How can one willingly go along with what is wrong?

It is significant that *Harper's* editor Lewis H. Lapham, a former Californian, has chosen to publish an attack on California in the February, 1979 issue of his magazine, and to conclude that attack with a confession. "I left California," Lapham writes, "because I didn't have the moral fortitude to contend with the polymorphousness of the place."

He's right. Moral fortitude is exactly what it takes to forego authority, to take responsibility for one's life, and to live affably in a society in which anything goes. Moral fortitude is exactly what it takes to deal with diversity, pluralism, heterogeneity—all the synonyms for cultural decadence. To those who lack it and find themselves unable to summon the will to develop it, decadence is obviously a frightening, unsettling phenomenon. To those who can meet the test, it is the gift of a lifetime: an opportunity to join in an era of unexampled liberty, creativity, progress, and peace. ❑

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The Myth of Monolithic Communism

MURRAY N. ROTHBARD

For decades it was an axiom of conservative faith that international Communism was and must be a monolith, that Communism in all its aspects and manifestations was simply pure evil (because it was "atheistic" and/or totalitarian by definition), and that therefore all Communism was necessarily the same.

For one thing, this meant that all Communist parties everywhere were of necessity simply "agents of Moscow". It took conservatives years to disabuse themselves of this mythology (which was true only during the 1930s and most of the 1940s). Tito's courageous break with Stalin and world Communism in 1948 was considered a trivial exception; and for many years after the bitter China-Russia split, conservatives clung to the fond hope that this split must be a hoax designed to deceive the West. However, now that China has shifted from attacking Russia for not being opposed enough to U.S. imperialism, to urging the U.S. ever onward to a war with Russia; and now that the Vietnamese Communists have crushed the Cambodian Communist regime in a lightning thrust, this myth of a world Communist monolith has at last had to be abandoned.

Why *should* all Communist parties and groups necessarily form a monolith? The standard conservative answer is that Communists all have the same ideology, that they are all Marxist-Leninists, and that therefore they should necessarily be united. In the first place, this is an embarrassingly naive view of ideological movements. Christians, too, are supposed to have the same religion and therefore should be united, but the historical record of inter-Christian warfare has been all too clear. Secondly, Marx, while eager enough to criticize feudalist and "capitalist" society, was almost ludicrously vague on what the future Communist society was supposed to look like, and what Communist regimes were supposed to do once their revolution had triumphed. If the same Bible has been used to support an enormous and discordant variety of interpretations and creeds, the paucity of details in Marx has allowed for an even wider range of strategies and actions by Communist regimes.

Moreover, ideology is not all. As libertarians should be aware, whenever *any* group, regardless of ideology, takes over a State, it immediately constitutes a ruling class over the people and the land governed by that State. It immediately acquires interests of State, which can readily clash with the interests of other State ruling classes, regardless of ideology. The splits between Yugoslavia and Russia, China and Russia, and now Vietnam and Cambodia, were mixtures in varying proprotions of inter-State and ideological clashes. And generally when one of these conflicts launched the fray, the other soon caught up.

But if everyone must now concede that there can be and are clashes and even bitter warfare between Communist states, libertarians have been slow to realize that Communism is not a monolith in yet another sense—in the sort of "domestic" or internal regime that Communist rulers will impose. There are now vast diferences among the various Communist regimes throughout the globe, divergences that literally spell the difference between life and death for a large part of their subject populations. If we want to find out about the world we live in, therefore, it is no longer enough for libertarians to simply equate Communism with badness, and let it go at that.

This necessity for grasping distinctions is particularly vital for libertarians: For our ultimate aim is to bring freedom to the entire world, and therefore it makes an enormous difference to us *in which direction* various countries are moving, whether toward liberty or toward slavery. If, in short, we consider a simplified spectrum of countries or societies, with total freedom at one end and total slavery at the other, different varieties of Communist regimes will range

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over a considerable length of that spectrum, from the horrifying slave state of Pol Pot's Cambodia all the way to the quasi-free system of Yugoslavia.

Until World War II, Soviet Russia was the only example of a Communist regime. And even it had gone through remarkable changes. When the Bolsheviks assumed power in late 1917, they tried to leap into full "communism" by abolishing money and prices, an experiment so disastrous (it was later dubbed "War Communism") that Lenin, always the supreme realist, beat a hasty retreat to a mere semi-socialist system in the New Economic Policy (NEP). During the mid and late 1920s, the ruling Communist apparatus debated within itself what path to pursue in the future. Nikolai Bukharin, Lenin's favorite theoretician, advocated moving forward to a free-market economy, with peasants allowed to develop their land voluntarily and to purchase manufactured goods from abroad. For a while it looked as if Bukharinism would win out, but then Stalin seized power in the late 1920s and early 1930s and brutally collectivized the peasantry and the rest of the economy, ushering in two decades of the classic Stalinist model: collectivized economy, forced industrialization and political terror.

The case of Yugoslavia

The first break from the Stalinist model was that of Tito, who followed his 1948 political break two years later with a remarkably rapid shift away from the collectivized economy and toward the market. By the late 1960s, Yugoslavia, which had never dared to collectivize agriculture, allowed numerous small private businesses, while the "socially owned sector" had been shifted to producers' coops, owned by the workers in each particular firm. Among these firms, a roughly free-price and free-market system was allowed to operate, and taxes were drastically lowered so that each worker-controlled firm controlled its investments out of its own profits. Along with the shift to the market came the welcoming of foreign investment, the freedom of emigration and return, extreme decentralization for the nationalities within Yugoslavia, and even limited contested elections and limited check by parliament upon the executive. Even philosophically, the Yugoslavs began to stress the primacy of the individual over the collective; and while political prisoners continue to exist there and free speech is feeble, the contrast with Stalinism is enormous. The Titoites have even decided to take seriously the long-forgotten Marxian promise of the "withering away of the State"; the way to do it, they have concluded, is to start withering. All observers remark that Belgrade and especially Croatian Zagreb are the only Communist cities in the world where the spirit of the people is happy, consumer goods are diverse and plentiful, and life is not simply a dim gray haze of shortages, queueing up, rationing, and enforced silence.

Following Yugoslavia's lead, the rest of Eastern Europe has also gone far along the path to free markets and a price system, although not nearly as far as pioneering Yugoslavia. The least degree of liberalization has occurred in Russia, although even here the status of dissidents today is far better than under Stalin.

This does not mean, of course, that Yugoslavia is "libertarian", or that the free-market has been fully established there. But it does mean that there is hope for freedom and for the human spirit when Eastern Europe has come so far in a relatively short time from collectivized misery to at least a semi-free system. Conservatives have always believed that once a nation goes Communist it is irrevocably doomed, that collectivism, once adopted, is irreversible. Yugoslavia,

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and to some extent the remainder of Eastern Europe, have shown that this is not true, that the spirit of freedom can never be extinguished.

The liberalization of China

For a long while it looked as if China would never be liberalized, that it would remain locked in the super-Stalinism of Maoism. For nearly a decade after their takeover, the Chinese Communists did retain a semi-free market system, only to extirpate it in two savage thrusts into totalitarianism: the Great Leap Forward of the late 1950s (which featured such disastrous economic experiments in self-sufficiency as a steel plant in every rural commune's backyard), and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s (in which the division of labor was crippled, education was stifled, economic incentives were eliminated, and compulsory communes were strengthened with a repressive apparatus extending into each urban block and rural village). Art, literature, and speech were all brutally suppressed.

It all came apart with the death in 1976 of the founding absolute despot himself, Mao Tse-tung. The "Gang of Four", led by Mao's widow Chiang Ching and leaders of the radical left, were arrested, to the tune of spontaneous outpourings of joy by the Chinese populace, even in "red" Shanghai. Mao's successors, led clearly over the last year by the twice-disgraced Teng Hsiao-p'ing, have moved with remarkable speed to dismantle totalitarian Maoism and to shift rapidly toward a far freer economy and society. Western culture is now permitted and encouraged. Wall posters are allowed which call for ever greater democracy and human rights, one even quoting from the American Declaration of Independence. And consumers are permitted to escape the compulsory ant-hill uniformity of clothing and to buy a variety of consumer goods. Workers are allowed to respond to economic incentives to produce and consume (instead of the "moral" incentives imposed by the bayonet and by Communist Party snoops). A far greater interplay of small-scale private property and free markets is permitted. A rule of law is soon to replace arbitrary whim by *ad hoc* military and party committees. And particularly important is that the Chinese are now telling their people that Mao, and even Marx himself, were not always right, that even Marxism must pass judgment before the bar of truth (now called, in Tengian jargon, "the Norm of Truth.") Foreign investment and trade is being encouraged.

In a sense, China has only now gone as far as Stalinism, although even that is a great improvement over Mao. But there are signs that it will go much further toward the Eastern European system. When Chinese Premier Hua Kung-fo visited Yugoslavia last year, he clapped his hands with glee when he heard that worker-owned firms there can actually go bankrupt. In the October 6, 1978 issue of China's major journal, the *People's Daily,* the veteran economist and historian Hu Chiao-mu, once a secretary to Mao, dumped during the Cultural Revolution, and now President of the new Tengian Academy of Social Sciences, published a highly significant article charting the nation's new economic course—"Observe Economic Laws and Speed Up the Four Modernizations." (*People's Daily,* Oct. 6, 1978. For an analysis, see *China News Analysis,* #1139, Nov. 10, 1978.)

Hu called for radical reorganization of the Chinese system, and for "rule by contracts instead of mandatory rule of the economy, with minimum government interference, which would also entail the withdrawal of the Party from running the economy." He advocated division of labor, freer trade, and putting economics above polictial power. Hu's statement that "experience has shown that socialism cannot guarantee that political power will not do immense damage to economic development" is a remarkable one, considering the source. *China News Analysis* concludes that

> What Hu describes is a free economy in which the workers sign a contract with the enterprise, the enterprise makes its own decision in the form of contracts with other enterprises or with the State, and the implementation of the contracts is controlled by the judiciary. What Hu envisages is, though this is not stated explicitly, an independent judiciary competent to adjudicate on contracts not only between individuals but also between the State and individual firms. Similarly the villages are to be left free to decide what to sow, and they are not to come under the authoritative rule of officials.

Again, no one is saying that China is or will soon become a libertarian Paradise, but the contrast with ant-hill Maoism is staggering.

UPI

The first communist ruler to break from the Stalinist model was Tito of Yugoslavia, who began permitting private ownership of businesses, like the produce stands in this open-air market, in the early 1950s.

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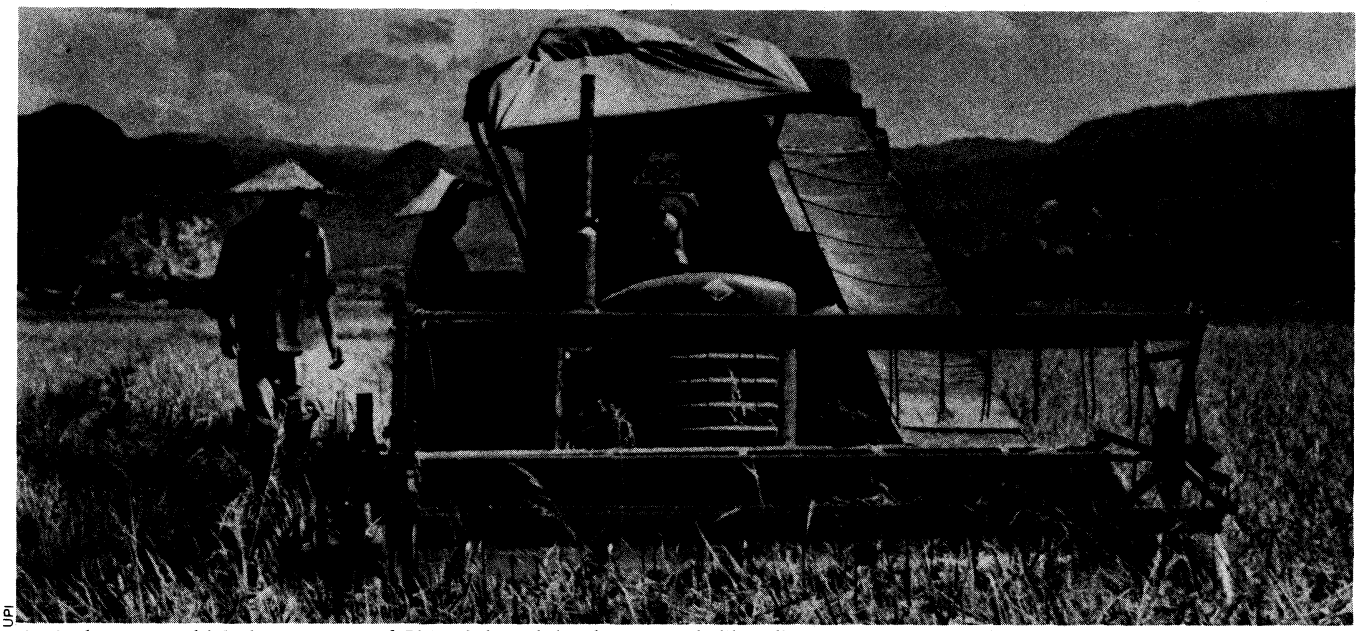
Toward liberty in Southeast Asia

This brings us finally to Vietnam and Cambodia. With its unfortunate and vicious nationalization of the merchants in the South last year, Vietnam has now taken its place as a typical Stalinist country. But Cambodia ("Democratic Kampuchea") was something else again. It was undoubtedly the most horrendous regime of this century anywhere in the world. Not only did the Cambodian Communists quickly murder millions after taking power, and forcibly evacuate the cities at one blow; not only was death the penalty for the slightest infraction or disobedience to the regime: the key to its diabolic control was its abolition of all money, which abolition is also enforced through murder and terror. Even Stalin, even Mao, retained the use of money; and so long as money exists, there is some sort of price system, and people are able to buy goods of their choice and move from place to place, even if in black markets or in disobedience to government regulations. But if money is abolished, then everyone is helpless, dependent for his very subsistence on the meager rations grudgingly handed to him by the regime in power. From the abolition of money came compulsory rural communalism, including the abolition of private eating, the institution of compulsory marriages, and the eradication of learning, culture, the family, religion, etc. Cambodia was horror incarnate.

The Vietnamese lightning thrust that smashed the Cambodian regime was not solely or even primarily caused by ideological considerations. Undoubtedly uppermost were ancient ethnic hostility between the more proserous Vietnamese and the more backward Khmers (inhabitants of Cambodia); the desire of the Vietnamese rulers to dominate all of Indochina; anger at long-repeated border incursions by Cambodian troops; and the Vietnamese fear of growing encirclement by the combined forces of the U.S. and China, supporting Cambodia on its southwestern flank. But there is no denying the horror that even the Vietnamese Stalinists felt for the Cambodian monstrosity. When they entered the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, the Vietnamese described the desolation of that city, and spoke of the deliberate mass murders, the forced evacuations. A top Vietnamese Communist official, Phan Trong Tue, spoke of the late Cambodian regime as having killed masses of people "with hammers, knives, sticks and hoes, like kiling wee insects." And then Tue rose to a pitch of eloquence:

> The whole country was reduced to nil; no freedom of movement, no freedom of association, no freedom of speech, no freedom of religion, no freedom to study, no freedom of marriage, no currency, no business, no trade, no more pagodas, and no more tears to shed over the people's sufferings. (U.P.I. dispatch, January 12, 1979)

We may contrast this to the shameful whitewashing of Cambodia by the American media after Cambodia's mentor China drew closer to the United States, and to the United States defense of Cambodia against Vietnam before the United Nations, coupled with the barest slap on the wrist for its "possible" violations of human rights.



UPI

Agriculture, on which the economy of China is based, has been greatly liberalized since Mao's death, and there are signs that the country will go much further toward the Eastern European system.

I hasten to add—for the benefit of attentive readers—that I do not condone the Vietnamese violation of the principle of non-intervention, and that if I were a Vietnamese, and in the unlikely event that I could express my dissent freely, I would have opposed the invasion. But now that the invasion has been concluded, we can all surely be permitted to rejoice at the death of the most monstrous, bizarre, and evil State in many centuries. As I tried to make clear at the collapse of the Thieu dictatorship in South Vietnam, one *can* hail the death of a State *without* implying approval of the State that replaces it. The new Vietnamese-backed National Salvation Front regime of Heng Samrin has already restored money, freedom of religion, freedom of marriage, freedom to return to cities, and freedom to cook and eat in one's own home (symbolized by the new regime's restoring a cooking pot to each family previously dragooned into communal kitchens.) The new Salvation Front regime is indeed a haven of freedom for the individual Cambodian compared to the previous slavery under Pol Pot. But this by no means implies that the new regime is libertarian or that its own statism should not be opposed and combatted by the Cambodian people.

But for the people of China and Cambodia, recent events have meant a leap toward freedom that can only bring rejoicing to the hearts of libertarians everywhere. ❑

Murray N. Rothbard is a contributing editor of LR.

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Chinese Communism and the Economic Revolution

LEONARD P. LIGGIO

The new relationship between China and the United States has a long history. America's long term interests in China date to 1784 when the clipper ship "Empress of China," sailed from New York for Canton. Although American shipping had dominated the British merchant marine for over a hundred years, this was the first American ship to travel to China. With the peace treaty between England and America after the Revolutionary War, American shipping could enter the area previously reserved by mercantilist legislation to the English East India Company—the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Americans traded the furs procured in the Pacific Northwest (in conflict with Russian, English and Spanish claims) for the teas of China. The amazing Baltimore Clippers, American's contribution to the highest technology of sailing ships, dominated the sea lanes to China and the East Indies during the early 19th century. With the ending of the Anglo-American administration of the Oregon territory and British Columbia in 1846 and the annexation of Alta California (and the western U.S.) from Mexico in 1848, the U.S. became even more interested in China and Japan. American agents sought to establish control over Formosa in the 1850s. American diplomats were active in seeking to annex Korea in the 1880s. Finally, in 1895, the Japanese unexpectedly defeated China in war, gaining Formosa and a leading position in Korea. Tsarist Russia, meanwhile, established a military dominance in Manchuria after adding large sections of it to Siberia in 1858 and 1860. Germany established a protectorate in north China, the British extended their sphere of influence from central China around Shanghai to the north, and France created an area of special interest in the south China provinces bordering its recently established protectorates in China's former vassal kingdom, Tonkin and Annam—Vietnam.

The U.S. felt left out of this whirlligig of spheres of influence over the world's largest population and market. When war with Spain was declared in 1898, before U.S. forces could cross the ninety miles to Cuba, Commadore Dewey's squadron in Far East waters conquered Manila harbor (May 2, 1898). The U.S. declared its intention to hold the harbor (finally taking the whole Philippines when the nationalists did not agree to ceding Manila to the U.S.) and immediately annexed the Hawaiian Islands (and Wake Island and Guam) as stepping stones—and military stations—to the China market. Thereafter, the U. S. participated in military expeditions in the Boxer Rebellion against foreign control of China.

Finally, a Republic was proclaimed in China in 1911 and the student radicalism in Chinese schools which had developed following the republican revolution exploded when it was announced that the Versailles Peace conference of 1919 had granted America's ally, Japan, a special position in China. The students' May Fourth Movement was the starting point for most of China's future radicals, including Mao Tse-tung. These young radicals, including Mao, first studied European anarchist writings because they learned from the western press, socialist and non-socialist alike, that the Soviet Revolution was anti-Marxist, since it was supposedly oriented toward the peasant and not the industrial worker, and therefore was anarchist. [Chow Tse-Tung, *May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China,*(Harvard University Press, 1960). See also the moving novel by Fei-Kan Li (Pa Chin), *The Family;* and Olga Lang, *Pa Chin and His Writings; Chinese Youth between Two Revolutions* (Harvard University Press, 1967)]. However, after a few years, Third International agents arrived to try to set the record straight—Lenin and Stalin considered themselves Marxists.

Meanwhile, many of the students had moved toward a

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more socialist position due to the overlapping years' long visits to Chinese universities of Bertrand Russell and John Dewey. Russell espoused a strongly decentralist philosophy emphasizing the peasants, traditional associations and the family, rather than Westernization. John Dewey countered with his centralized socialism or industrial democracy in which the peasants, traditional associations and the family would be crushed before the power of Westernization. The major focus of the students was to free China from foreign domination, and they believed that Westernization was a necessity to have the strength to achieve that goal.

Meanwhile, many of the students went to European universities, where they became communists. The new Chinese communist party allied with Chiang Kai-shek against the war lords. But when Chiang won Shanghai he turned on the communists and slaughtered them.

Mao Tse-tung, who had opposed the Russian-imposed urban worker strategy, now emerged to lead a peasant based movement which survived only by the Long March (discussed in the pro-Mao *Red Star over China,* by Edgar Snow). When the conflict with Japan expanded in the 1930s, Chiang withdrew from the industrial coastal cities to the interior of China. This involved Japan with the American military and naval forces stationed in China. From 1901 to 1938 the 15th United States Infantry was stationed in Tientsin. Over 500 U.S. Marines were stationed in Peking; from 1000 to 2000 Marines were stationed in Shanghai. U.S. Marines were stationed on the ships of the U.S. Asiatic fleet which wintered in the Philippines and summered in north China at the Shantung peninsula. During Franklin Roosevelt's administration, U.S. forces in the Philippines were ready for short-notice orders to go to China, and several thousand Marines from the Fleet Main Base at San Diego were always available for service across the Pacific. The U.S. navy maintained the Yangtze River Patrol and the South China Patrol, both of which were composed of gunboats.

Chinese nationalism divides

When Chiang abandoned the industrial coastal cities to the Japanese, the Nationalist movement split. The liberal capitalist merchants, bankers and industrialists (left-Kuomintang) who had sought the modernization of China, including the ending of landlord tax-collector feudalism and the recognition of the peasants' right to the ownership of their land, remained with their capital and property in the cities. Their leader, Chiang's prime minister, Wang Ching-wei, established a left-wing or capitalist government in Nanking and became prime minister of a Chinese government allied with Japan. Chiang, in the interior, ruled with the support of the landlord tax-collectors and their sons the army officers (right-Kuomintang). Freed from the money power of the left or capitalist wing, the landlords began a feudal reaction to re-establish collection of taxes and feudal dues from the peasants. The peasants turned for help to the armed force willing to side with them; the communists. When the Japanese surrendered, over one hundred thousand American troops were aiding Chiang in taking control of north China's cities, while the communists rushed to consolidate their control over the countryside. Thereafter, the U.S. poured billions in military supplies into the Chiang army. But time after time huge American-equipped armies went over to the communists: the communist commanders said they had the best supply system in the world, *American* supplies which they needed only to capture in order to have American-made weapons.

After the communists captured the capital, Nanking, the American diplomatic staff remained, while the Soviet diplomats dutifully followed Chiang further and further south. However, when the communists moved the capital to Peking, the Americans refused to move north and finally ended diplomatic relations. The British, following international law, recognized the new government and benefited from a quarter-century of nearly exclusive trade with China.

When the Chinese Communists came to power in October, 1949 it was at the end of a long period of conflict internally: the warlords, the Japanese, civil war, and, at the beginning of external conflicts, the Korean war to 1953 and France's Vietnam war to 1954. The political trials, detentions and executions are part of the wide area of denial of civil liberties in China. Having spent a quarter-century winning the support of the peasants as the basis of their victory, the communists faced what became a continuing dilemma —how to relate to the private property attitudes of the peasants and still have political control.

In one sense, this was part of the broader problem of how to conduct a complex economy while attempting to impose political controls on the market. Because inflation had been a major cause of popular disaffection with the Chiang regime (the Nationalist secret police engaged in wholesale executions of businessmen for violations of the price control regulations during the runaway inflation), the communists went out of their way to establish a stable monetary system.

In order to accumulate capital for industrial development they encouraged savings, and offered interest rates to attract them. Where industrial firms were nationalized, the former owners were given twenty-year interest-paying bonds and were encouraged to remain as managers at attractive salaries —which became the subject of much criticism at the height of the cultural revolution. [The development of responses to the need for market processes to operate the Chinese economy is examined by Dwight H. Perkins, *Market Control and Planning in Communist China* (Harvard University Press, 1966) and Perkins, ed., *China's Modern Economy in Historical Perspective* (Stanford University Press, 1975).]

Agriculture is the base of the Chinese economy. When they came to power the Chinese communists rejected the Soviet model of using agriculture as merely a means for amassing capital for industrialization. Instead, the communists viewed the peasants as the potential mass of consumers for industrial products. Thus, even in the parts of agriculture in which communes were established, the peasants owned their own homes, work tools, domestic animals, individual plots of land and bank deposits. Kenneth Walker [*Planning in Chinese Agriculture, Socialisation and the Private Sector, 1956-1962*] has noted the discouragement produced by comparison of collective agriculture in the Soviet Union to its private peasant farming. With a high proportion of Soviet dairy and vegetable production in the private sector, the Chinese emphasized voluntary participation in cooperatives and higher prices for farm goods.

During the 1950s there was a process of loosening controls on the peasants; although rice and grain lands were more likely to be under cooperative or collective operation, vegetables and livestock were mainly private. In Kiangsu province in 1957 only 3% of pigs were collectively owned. In the January, 1966 *Asian Survey* Michael Okenberg noted that there had been a large increase in hog production due to price incentives to private hog producers.

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Walker noted that private plots were larger in socialist collectives (in order to encourage peasants to voluntarily establish collectives) than in the non-socialist cooperatives. In both, the peasants had much independence, but the collectives introduced profit-sharing in order to encourage production.

The great leap backward

However, in mid-1958, Mao introduced his most fantastic undertaking: The Great Leap Forward. In addition to trying to develop industry without capital investment in tools and machinery by emphasizing labor intensive methods, he undertook a push to collectivize agriculture and force peasants into more collectivized "communes." Political incentives were substituted for market price incentives. The set-backs on all fronts of the economy suffered by China (to which was added the withdrawal of Soviet technical assistance) led to the *de facto* retirement of Mao from political leadership. Mao left the presidency and limited himself to ideological work as Party Chairman. In a February 1959 conference it was noted that the public sector could not produce enough pigs to provide fertilizers for the soil, and so a major effort was established to encourage private pig rearing by price incentives. In the Spring of 1961 the party line was declared to be: "take privately reared pigs as the main source, publicly reared pigs as the auxiliary."

"During 1978, the Chinese leadership visited Yugoslavia, discovered the market road to socialism, and embarked on a radically market-oriented path of economic development."

From 1960 there were calls in the party press for the restoration of private plots where they had been collectivized, or making the private plots large enough for realistic farming (the pre-1956 plots were viewed as the standard size). The private farm plot was declared to be the desire of the vast mass of the population and that the party had to accede to this popular demand. A debate ensued as to whether the private farm plot was socialist or feudal in character. Some party experts held that the private farm plot was "one form of socialism." In China everything backward is viewed as feudal; everything modern and productive is viewed as "socialist". Thus, industry and price incentives are viewed as "socialist" and inefficient methods as "feudal". Most party spokesmen held that private farm plots were "individual" in character and did not involve exploitation of labor. And being "individual" they were "socialist." During 1961 the private plots were the dominant form and have survived as such since then. Teng Hsiao-p'ing advocated individual farming and expansion of free markets (legalizing black markets).

In January, 1965, Ch'en Yun, who had opposed the militant collectivization plans in agriculture reappeared in public life. Ch'en Yun was a member of the seven-member standing committee of the Communist Party Politburo. The maintenance of the non-collectivist emphasis in Chinese agriculture continued during the Cultural Revolution which began to emerge in late 1965, in large measure in response to the escalation of the American intervention on China's border in Vietnam.

The central thread running through the ideology of the cultural revolution was the assault on dogmatism whether in the government or the party. In particular, the cultural revolution began as an ideological attack on state power, as personified by President Liu Shao-chi. His major work, "How to be a Good Communist," was viewed as the epitome of the ideology of bureaucracy: obedience to power is extolled and submission to the communist party and its decisions are given priority over truth. At the beginning of the cultural revolution, K.S. Karol, (*China, The Other Communism*, 1967), quoted Mao: "if Marxism-Leninism could be summed up in a single sentence, it would be: to rebel is justified." Karol concluded that "Mao would like to institutionalize disobedience of superior authorities, thus erecting a permanent barrier against the men in power."

International affairs played a central role in the origins of the cultural revolution. Liu Shao-chi and his protege, Peking mayor Peng Chen, in the split with the Soviet Union, had sought to encourage the sectarian formation of rival new communist parties. In addition, emphasis was placed on support of state power, especially in relations with Asian and African countries. The Indonesian army coup of September 1965 triggered Mao's return to power via the Cultural Revolution. Defense Minister Lin Piao's "People's War" (1965) became the guide book of the cultural revolution. Lin recommended the wholehearted application of "national democratic revolutions" which embrace the revolutionary middle classes—"patriotic and anti-imperialist democrats"—on the principle of the "broadest possible united front" and of "winning over the middle forces and isolating the reactionary forces." Premier Chou En-lai, who had been the political instructor of Lin Piao at the military academy, sought to develop a new foreign policy in the context of the recent failures and in the context of the American escalation in Vietnam.

One of the results of the Cultural Revolution was to turn the major cities and their industrial complexes over to army direction. The substitution of the authoritarianism and dogmatism of the military for those of the party made a bad situation worse. For if the party at times was forced to deal with the reality of the public's opinion and consumer preference, these were realities totally absent from the army's functions. The chairman of the state planning commission, Politburo member, Po I-po, one of the most knowledgeable economists in China with a deep understanding of price mechanisms, was purged, as was the secretary-general of the Chinese communist party, Teng Hsiao-p'ing. Attacks on Po I-po reached a high pitch by August, 1970. Thereafter, Chou En-lai regained a leading role in the economic area, and sought to re-establish proper accounting in industry. After the death of Marshall Lin Piao (September, 1972) while Mao's wife and her associates dominated the ideological arena, Chou En-lai moved toward more rational industrial policies. A former associate of Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Yu Ch'iu-li became head of the state planning commissions, (October, 1972) and Teng re-appeared in public in April,1973. Teng was formally rehabilitated in January, 1974.

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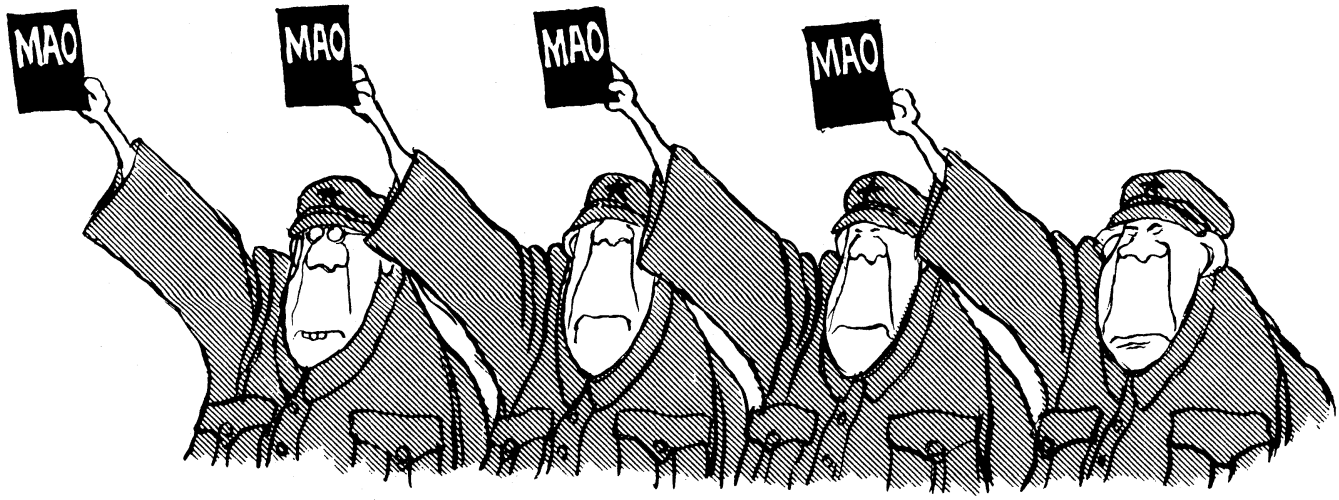


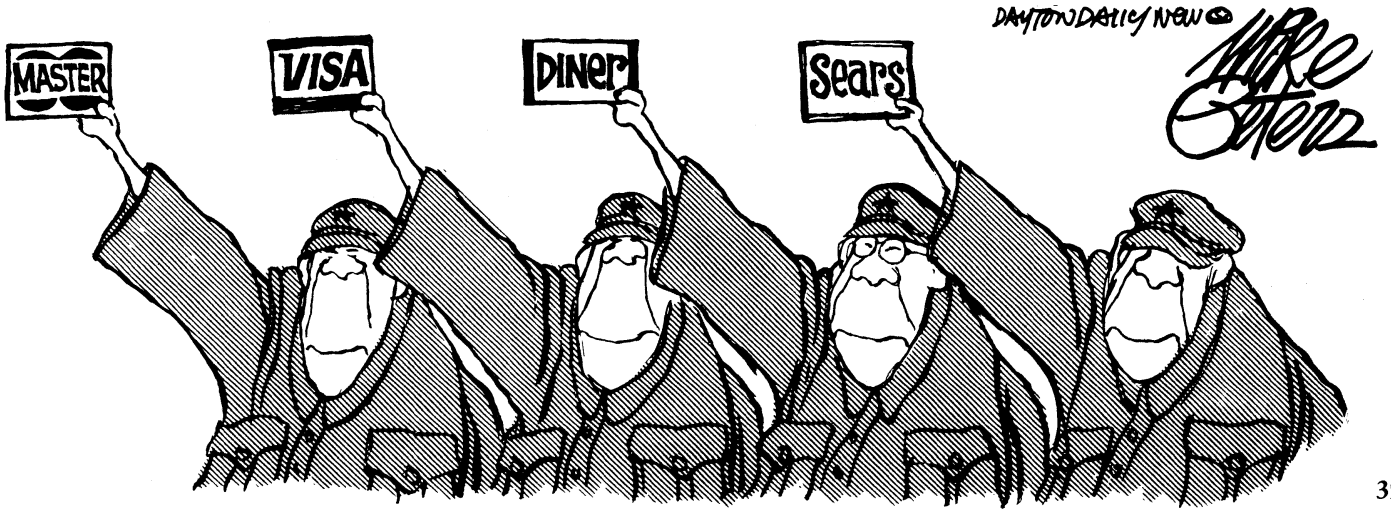
Enter the Nixon administration

In July, Henry Kissinger visited China (secretly) for the first time. In November, China was admitted to the United Nations. In February, 1972 Richard Nixon visited China, and with Chou issued the Shanghai Communique, the basis for subsequent U.S.–Chinese relations. In September, Japan and China established full diplomatic relations, and soon China was in close contact with the European Common Market as well as the major European industrial countries: England, France and West Germany. Strong emphasis was placed on using foreign technology in order to modernize Chinese industry.

In January, 1975 Chou En-lai announced new plans for industrialization and modernization. In October, Hua Kuo-feng emerged to prominence by presenting the report of the National Conference on Learning from Tachai in Agriculture (Tachai is China's major oil field in Manchuria). In January, 1976 Chou died, with his memorial speech presented by Teng Hsiao-p'ing. In February a new campaign against Teng was launched, and he was purged anew in April. Hua Kuo-feng was appointed premier in place of Chou on the basis of his leading role in agricultural policy. After Mao's death in September, Hua was named party chairman and Mao's widow and her associates were denounced for dislocating economic development, especially with reference to agricultural production. In December a Second National Conference on Agriculture was held. In January, 1977 official policy emphasized "prosperity," "political liveliness," the blooming of a "hundred flowers," and "comprehensive modernization." In August, the 11th Party Congress set guidelines for economic development under Hua's leadership and re-rehabilitated Teng.

During 1978 the Chinese leadership embarked on a radically market-oriented path of economic development. Hua Kuo-feng, party chairman and premier, visited Yugoslavia and discovered the market road to socialism. The clear intention of the Chinese leadership is to go beyond the limited economic liberalization introduced to Soviet Russia by Khrushchev. It is aiming at the much more market-directed Yugoslav model. As Fox Butterfield (*New York Times Magazine*, Dec. 10, 1978) noted: "hardly a week goes by without a Chinese delegation trooping off to study some aspect of the Yugoslav experience, from its system of worker self-management to its wide-open tourist policy. . . . In recent weeks, the world's leading bankers have been virtually tripping over themselves in the lobby of the old Peking Hotel in a scramble to help finance these enormous purchases, which would mount up to $60 billion." With the almost $50 billion owed to U.S. banks by Russia and the Soviet bloc, such credits could severely test the West's financial structure. Bank of America executive vice-president, James Wiesler says that although little is known of China's financial situation, there is intense competition among foreign banks to provide loans.

Recently *Peking Review* has published articles which reveal the new direction of the Chinese economy: "Refuting Yao Wen-yuan's Fallacy that the Principle 'To Each According to His Work' Breeds Bourgeoisie," by Su Shao-chich and Geng Lan-jui (February 10, 1978), and "On the Question of Profit," by Hsu Ti-hsin (February 24, 1978). Hsu said that through profit "we can check the economic results of the



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management of our enterprises and evaluate their contributions to the state, thereby prompting the enterprises to make careful calculations, practice business accounting, reduce costs and increase profits." Hsu says that a socialist economy should not "onesidedly" stress profit, but should put planning first and price second. His conclusion, however, strongly affirms that

socialist enterprises must first of all ensure the quality of their products and try to improve it continually. With this as the precondition, they do their best to increase production, practice economy, cut down the cost and make more profits. It is quite obvious that the greater the amount of such profits the better, for it is a proof that these enterprises are operating efficiently and are making greater contributions to the state and people. This has nothing in common with "putting profit in command."

"In recent weeks, the world's leading bankers have been virtually tripping over themselves in the lobby of the old Peking Hotel in a scramble to help finance China's enormous new purchases."

In *Peking Review*, December 8, 1978, an article on "Technology Import and Self-Reliance" quoted Mao: "Rely mainly on our own efforts while making external assistance subsidiary, break down blind faith, go in for industry, agriculture and technical and cultural revolutions independently, do away with slavishness, bury dogmatism, learn from the good experience of other countries conscientiously and be sure to study their bad experience too, so as to draw lessons from it. This is our line." China is embarking on a vast program of importing technology from abroad. American and European companies are seeking contracts with China. The Japanese are being favored by the Chinese as the preferred trading partner, because Japan does not have a large military establishment threatening China (and without a major military budget it has lower costs than the U.S.).

China News Analysis, July 14 and 21, 1978, discussed the movement toward profits in the Chinese economy, including the National Conference on Turning Losses into Gains by Strengthening the Economic Management of the Enterprises. Some of the economic reports regarding the economy frankly describe the gap between planning and reality. There may be a movement toward calling the goal of production for profit, "the plan," and allowing the realization of profitability as the fulfillment. Planning now refers to imposing the discipline of prices on consumers, including state agencies and even the army. Many of the new ideas are emerging from the Academy of Social Sciences, headed by Hu Ch'iao-mu, a major adviser of Teng. *China News Analysis*, July 14, 1978, concludes: "It is quite possible that there are men in Peking who see that the present system of planned economy is not working and cast a furtive glance at the system in force in Yugoslavia. Certainly Cheng Ming, a new monthly magazine vociferous in support of Teng Hsiao-p'ing, which is appearing in Hong Kong under communist auspices, had in its 8th issue a long article praising to the skies the self-management of the factories of Yugoslavia."

Leonard P. Liggio is an associate editor of LR.

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BOOKS AND THE ARTS

Pilgrims' regress

THOMAS SZASZ

The Language of Madness *by David Cooper, Allen Lane, $4.95. No American Edition.*

Conversations with Children *by R.D. Laing, Allen Lane, $3.95. American Edition: Conversations with Adam and Natasha, Pantheon, $6.95.*

IN 1964, COOPER and Laing, the founding fathers of "anti-psychiatry," co-authored *Reason and Violence.* **In 1967, Laing contributed a chapter to Cooper's** *Dialectics of Liberation.* **Since then, their paths have seemingly diverged. I say seemingly, because actually they haven't; each has continued to write about the one thing he loves—namely,** himself. However, each has demonstrated his love in different ways.

Cooper's style is cant in almost pure form. For special effect, he uses oxymorons, such as the farewell in his previous book, *The Grammar of Living*. "My next book," he wrote there, "will be different. It will not be by me." I am sorry to have to report that his new book, *The Language of Madness,* is still by him.

At least, Cooper is a naive Rousseauian. *Au fond,* human beings are rich, creative, loving, good, you name it. What's wrong with the world is that all these "goodies" have been stolen from us. I am not simplifying what Cooper is saying; I am only summarizing it. "To act politically," he asserts, "means simply regaining what has been stolen from us, starting with our consciousness of our oppression within the capitalist system." According to Cooper, everything that most of us think is bad is really good, and vice versa. Systematically inverting values is Cooper's idea of explaining social phenomena and rectifying their defects. For example: "Madness is a common social property that has been stolen from us, like the reality of our dreams and our deaths; we have to get these things back politically so that they become creativity and spontaneity in a transformed society."

Nevertheless, Cooper's work has certain redeeming qualities that deserve recognition, even respect. He does not hide where he stands—on politics, economics, or anything else. Primarily, Cooper is against the free market and individualism. "Fruit dies on the trees," he explains, "because peasant farmers can't deal with a parasitic market structure which stops the fruit that they gather meeting the mouths of other workers who supply them in turn—by their work." He praises Marx, "who learnt about money and then learnt how to hate it, how to hate the market place of exchange value..."

Conversely, Cooper is for Communism, victims and the prefix "anti". Anti-psychiatry was merely his first flirtation parleying a prefix into a career, as the following examples illustrate: "Anti-definition ... is a way of opening up the definiendum ... Anti-classification means seeking and stating existing differences as opposed to enclosing entities in boxes..." His new antis amplify his earlier ones, such as "anti-aesthetics," eulogised in *The Grammar of Living* thus: "We have passed the last day of the 'great' one-name works of art and have entered the time of communal creation. Henceforth there will be no more Beethovens, no more Rembrandts, no more Tolstoys.... We shall create the quotidian Dada, an anti-aesthetics of everyday life." Enough? Not for Cooper. He has a seemingly inexhaustible supply of things and ideas he wants to invert. The clitoris is a "stunted penis" said Freud; for Cooper it's a superphallus: "Some psycho-technicians find it incomprehensible when I say that women—*physiologically* speaking [Cooper's emphasis]—have bigger phalluses than men." For Freud, the dream was the "royal road to the unconscious"; for Cooper, "the dream is the anti-psychoanalysis."

R.D. Laing

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Although there is an occasional well-turned phrase or well-observed human predicament in this book, *The Language of Madness* (an utterly misleading title, of course) is a pitiful piece of work. Even as Communist propaganda, it is primitive. "There are," writes Cooper, articulating his recommendation for social change, "two things to be done: firstly, the final extinguishing of capitalism and the entire mystifying ethos of private property; secondly, the social evolutions that ... will produce the classless society."

Why Cooper believes what he believes is his business. His personal affairs concern us only insofar as he tells us of them, which he does in embarrassing detail. For example, he tells us that he has "no secretary or fixed address", that "there are no examples to follow, certainly not mine", that "I was mad briefly, but for enough weeks to begin to know a little..."; and that "one might argue that the incapacity for homosexual experience is an 'illness' in need of 'treatment'." Such self-disclosures don't enhance Cooper's dignity. But, then, Cooper seems to want to shame himself in public. He is a religious fanatic who wants to expiate his guilt—for what I don't know, and if I did, I would keep the information to myself. Cooper himself offers some clues. "One of the critical experiences of my life," he writes about his favorite subject, "was when at the age of four, at a circus in Cape Town, I burst into tears because I thought the clown had been really hurt by the wicked ring master. I could not be consoled until the clown came into the audience to tell me that the hurt was an illusion, make-belief." He is still weeping, and is proud of it.

As Cooper's distinctive stylistic flourish is the prefix "anti", so Laing's is the blank page of paper. I think it's in *The Politics of Experience,* in 1967, that he first alludes to his interest in "empty white sheet(s) of paper": "Few books today are forgivable. Black on the canvas, silence on the screen, an empty white sheet of paper, are perhaps feasible." His recent books, such as *Facts of Life, Do You Love Me?,* and *Conversations with Children,* contain lots of "empty white sheets." Unfortunately, not all of the pages of his most recent books are clean sheets; some are soiled by printer's ink.

According to Laing, *Conversations with Children* is an "anthology" of his conversations with his own children, which he considers important because "no similar anthology of dialogues with children has been published." He claims that the "anthology" is authentic and accurate. Since it's a record of conversations, the implication is that it is a verbatim, or near verbatim, account of what was said by each speaker. "I have added nothing," says Laing. "I am responsible for deletions, and I suppose, inevitably, some inadvertent omissions. But I have made no additions, no embellishments." How, then, did Laing obtain such a faithful record? "No tape recorder was ever used," he hastens to explain. "The conversations in this anthology were written down by me from memory over a six-year period as part of a journal I keep. They are all recorded from memory." Well, either Laing has a fantastic memory or his claim concerning the absolute authenticity of these conversations is a lie.

How does Laing justify publishing such an ostensibly intimate diary of his children's babblings (or babblings he attributes to them), thus making a part of their private world public? He knows, of course, that doing so constitutes an invasion of their privacy. But publishing such "intimacies [of] family life," was permissible, he tells us, because it "is done with the full accord of my wife—and the children." That self-justification reveals the full measure of Laing's utter contempt for an ethic of respect for persons grounded in contract. The children on whom he so generously bestows the right to contract range in age between three and eight. If a father took sexual liberties with children of that age and then told us that they (and their mother!) consented to it, we would regard his self-justification as adding insult to injury.

Why did Laing write this book? Having written several books about the unhappy communications characteristic of other people's families, Laing felt ready, he says, to present "the other side of the story... the language of the happy dialogue of intelligent beings..." Where was he going to find such "beings"? In his own family, where else? "It is," he writes gravely, "a great pleasure and relief for me to present these dialogues which express so much lightheartedness and serious delight ... In the following pages, we are able to observe the emotional and cognitive development of two children with unimpaired faculties unfold within the interlace and interweave of relations with adults whom they do not fear and whom they like as they are liked."

The entries in the book range from the trivial to the offensive. Many entries are simply empty; for example, a third of a page is occupied by this one: "December 1973: Natasha wants sellotape for Xmas." Among the entries I consider offensive is this one: "Daddy: What was the first thing you saw when you came out of mummy's tummy? Natasha: Mummy's pussa, that's the first thing I saw when I came out of mummy's tummy."

The entry I like best (which also takes up a third of a page) reads: "Natasha (aged six): Did you write this book? (*Do You Love Me?*). Daddy: Yes. Natasha: They've printed it very well (turning the pages) there's not much on the paper. Look, there's hardly anything on that page. Or that page. There's the littlest I've ever seen. I think this is the silliest book I've ever seen."

What are we to make of *Conversations with Children*? It's not really a book; it only looks like one. Therein, perhaps, lies the answer to the question I posed. The book is a joke, a put-on. Intoxicated with himself, Laing is playing not only before his audience, but also with it. His seemingly multifaceted personality has now fused into a single role—namely, that of clown. Peter Mezan, who knows Laing personally, has actually characterised Laing in such a way: "In the mind's eye, under the magical sign of the caduceus, stands a gaunt, pixielike man in the garb of prophet—acid at his right hand, revolution at his left, his head haloed with the clear light of an Oriental paradise, his eyes intimating madness —crushing beneath his avenging foot the serpent of the Western rationalist tradition ... In a single evening I have seen him run the gamut of emotions, taking on one distinct person after another, even changing sex, and in each one appearing to be wholly himself."

How ironic, but how fitting. Laing, the clown, the Marcel Marceau of psychiatry. Cooper, the violated "madman," the vulnerable, frightened child. The fooler and the fooled. What a perfect pantomime of madness and mad-doctoring! Cooper has a big heart that bleeds for victims, especially of his own imaginings. His compassion has become cancerous and has all but destroyed him. Laing, on the other hand, has a good nose for business—in particular, for selling his dramatized impersonations of himself. So far he has sold himself as student of schizophrenia, theoretician of anti-psychiatry, charismatic

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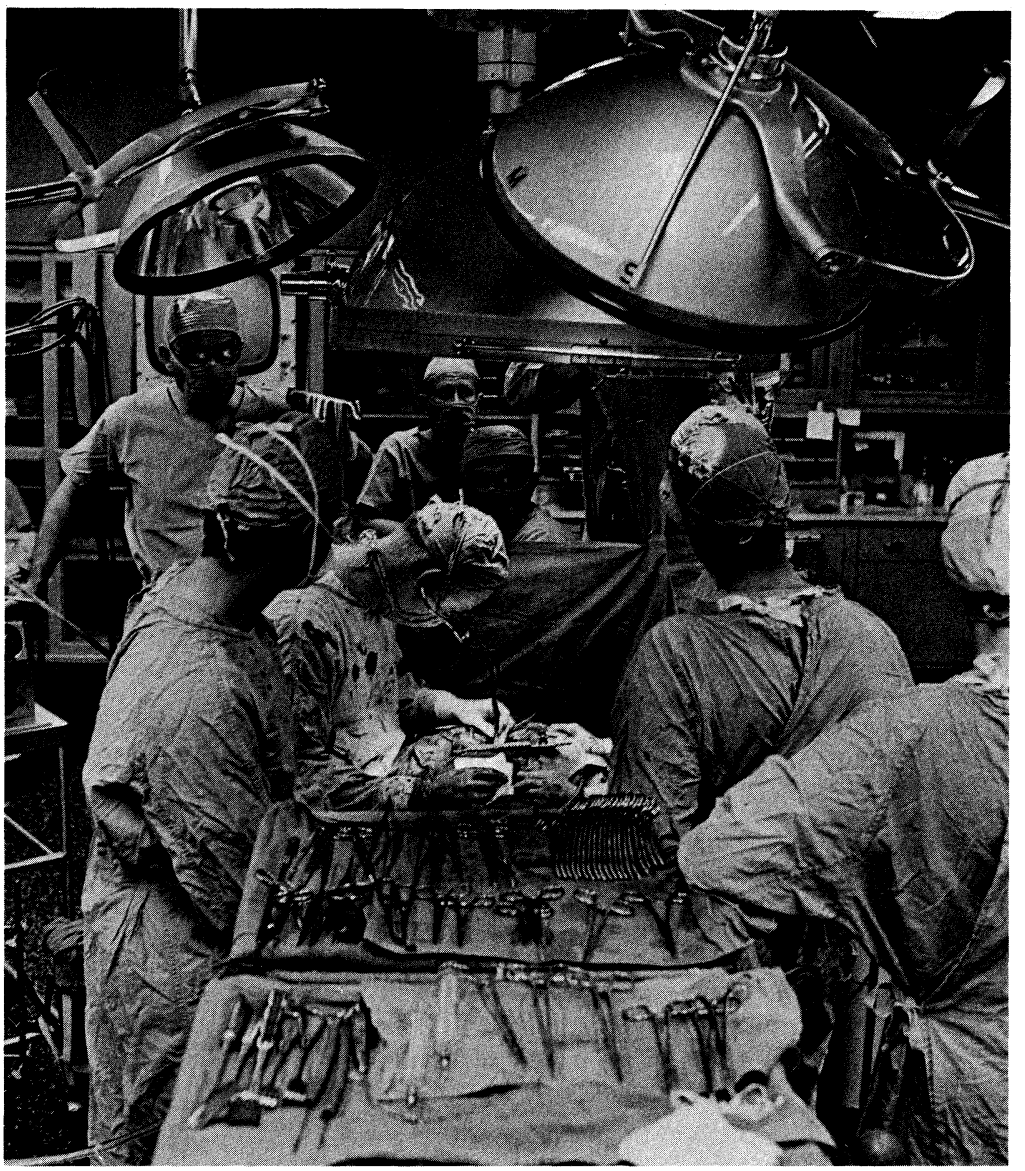
healer of madness, existential philosopher, New Leftist social critic, guru of LSD, Buddhist monk, and radical critic of the family. Now he is posing as devoted paterfamilias, basking in "happy" communications with his children. Cooper is often wrongheaded, but is honest. Laing is often level-headed, but is he ever honest?

Thomas Szasz's latest book is *The Myth of Psychotherapy.* He teaches psychiatry at the State University of New York's Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, and contributes frequently to LR. The present review is reprinted by permission from the British magazine, *The Spectator.*

Doctoring the figures

MARSHALL E. SCHWARTZ

Defective Medicine *by Louise Lander. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 242 pp., $10.* Pain and Profit—The Politics of Malpractice *by Sylvia Law and Steven Polan, Harper and Row, 305 pp., $12.95.* The Malpractitioners *by John Guinther, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 347 pp., $10.00.*



One-third of all surgical deaths and half of all surgical complications are probably preventable.

DURING A FIVE WEEK period of 1976, many doctors in Los Angeles county withheld their services in protest against the soaring malpractice insurance bills they had received. A most curious and disturbing sequel to this story appeared in the newspapers last October: During this period, when surgery declined by nearly 60 percent, there was a significant drop in the death rate in Los Angeles, climbing again (from 19.2 to 26 per 100,000 population) during the first five weeks after the doctors went back to work.

If these figures are a true reflection of the state of American medicine, then perhaps the continuing malpractice crisis is the best medication possible for the health of the American public. Unfortunately, the sad state of American medical practice—as evidenced by statistics like those from Los Angeles—and the much-bruited malpractice crisis of the 1970s are both symptoms of the same underlying malady. Yet the burgeoning studies of this crisis are devoted mainly to detailed symptomatologies—identifying such ailments as the overspecialization of American medicine; the ever-increasing use of hospitals rather than the home or doctor's office to treat patients; the poor self-regulation of the medical profession, with its high yield of incompetent practitioners and unnecessary surgical and diagnostic procedures; the contingency fee system for attorneys; overgenerous jury awards; poor underwriting practices; the use of increases in malpractice premiums to make up for insurance companies' stock market losses; and the foisting off on the public and on regulatory agencies of deliberately false and misleading figures by the insurance industry—rather than to root causes.

And that's what journalist John Guinther and attorneys Sylvia Law and Steven Polan offer us in their new books on malpractice—along with their own personal, statist solutions to this peculiarly American problem. To be sure, both of these studies are overflowing with useful information, particularly Guinther's revelations about the insurance industry's quasi-legal financial manipulations, and Law and Polan's clear and exhaustive explanations of both the common law roots of malpractice law and today's tangled legal spiderweb. But neither book—despite occasional telling observations which, inexplicably, are never followed up—addresses either of the fundamental defects which have distorted American medicine: the unending regulation by federal, state, and local governments, and the absorption of the medical profession into the American corporate state.

Defective Medicine by Louise Lander is more difficult, if not impossible, to cat-

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egorize—exasperatingly so, at times. For Lander delves further than any of the other authors toward finding the first causes. And so many of her analyses, her descriptions, her polemics are tantalizingly libertarian in tone. In fact, there is nothing in her book, if examined from the appropriate perspective, that is antilibertarian in nature. Yet she, too, never quite arrives at her apparent goal, never *names* the statist excess that continues to lead American medicine to the brink of disaster, but only describes it. The libertarian reader is left with the impression of someone giving an incredibly compelling description of an elephant, but being unable to call it "elephant" because she just doesn't know the word.

For libertarians, this is not a major defect, however, for we are able to supply the needed words, *name* the names ourselves, once we are presented with all the vital details from the proper perspective. And that is a task Lander performs admirably.

Her approach is delineated in the book's subtitle, *Risk, Anger, and the Malpractice Crisis*. Observing that only a small fraction of incidents that could be considered acts of malpractice ever result in a claim being filed—much less ending in payment to the claimant—Lander points out that a second factor must also be present before a malpractice claim occurs: The patient must be *angry*—at a doctor, at a hospital, at a nurse or attendant, at *somebody*. And, Lander argues, those factors that cause anger in the patients also force patients to undergo more procedures, both diagnostic and therapeutic, that put them at risk of injury.

To Lander, a major underlying cause of the problem is the ideology of modern medical practice, an ideology that "has very little to do with the human experience of being sick." Instead of dealing with the whole person—how the illness affects what the person does, how what the patient does affects the illness, and how the patient himself can affect the illness—the ideology of modern medicine "has much more to do with the needs of physicians for a conceptualized framework that will focus and simplify their work and that will justify the segmented, episodic, superspecialized, individualistic character of their work arrangement." In other words, physicians have aimed at constructing an ideology, a medical model, if you will, that justifies the corporatization of American medicine.

The resulting construct is "the biomedical model of medicine":

> the notion that a given disease can be explained by a distinct, well-defined biochemical or physical abnormality. . . the general assumption that a disease reflects disordered biological mechanisms that can ultimately be described in terms of chemistry and physics and that are independent of social behavior or intrapsychic processes. The model is reductionistic, explaining complex phenomena by invoking a single ultimate principle; dualistic, reflecting a separation of mind and body; and mechanistic, reflecting a view of the human body as a machine.

This model provides a "theoretical" basis for the specialization of medicine organ by organ, and for the structure of insurance reimbursement, procedure by procedure. There is no place left to view the patient as a whole, with this fragmentation leading to higher risk and greater alienation for the patient. Ultimately, this "biomedical model makes of doctors the priests of a secular religion, a variant of the more general secular faith that technology is the answer to all worldly ills and that what is newer is by definition better." That piece of commentary by Lander sounds as if it could have been lifted whole from one of Dr. Thomas Szasz's attacks.

And, as with any corporate model, the "theory" is self-aggrandizing and self-perpetuating. As a result, you will rarely find a patient and his doctor discussing "his backache, headaches, or bellyaches in the context of his life situation," so that they could be dealt with by the patient attempting to change "his job, his marriage, his neighborhood, his diet, his activities, or his general manner of relating to other people." Instead, the biomedical model protects the vested medical interests by refusing to look at the patient as a whole. Otherwise, Lander remarks,

> The physician would lose not only income from return visits but also the psychological gratification of feeling that the patient is dependent on his professional expertise. The pharmaceutical industry would not only lose a participant in the immediate sense but would possibly also lose a participant in a lifelong symbiotic relationship with that industry that most people enter into much to its profit. The whole referral structure of specialists, diagnostic equipment, and hospitals would suffer a loss of both income and the exalted status it has come to be accorded.

As a result the "healing" relationship dies—the "trust," the "altruistic concern," even the "nonrational" elements identified by Szasz in his dissections of modern psychotherapy. What is left is medicine as a commodity, and the doctor as a corporate executive (aided by the prodding of physicians' journals and professional management firms). This approach must inevitably increase the chances for a malpractice suit, for "if the patients see medical treatment sold like goods and services they buy in the commercial arena," Lander declares, "then it is only natural that patients feel anger and seek economic redress when the medical product or service turns out to be in some sense defective."

Commodification of medicine has another dangerous ramification: the standardization of a profession which, above all others, *must* be individualized if it is to be truly effective. All this would be unthinkable without the biomedical model, for it is relatively easy to standardize an organ or a "diagnosis-and-age combination," but impossible to standardize the whole person.

And standardization inevitably goes hand-in-hand with regulation—whether government-imposed, or self-imposed and government supported. For if a physician and his colleagues are trying to standardize their treatments of various "disease entities," using a fallacious theory as the basis of their action, how can they reply to the patients of a nonstandard practitioner, one who refuses to dress in their garment cut from whole cloth?

Both Guinther, in *The Malpractitioners*, and Law and Polan, in *Pain and Profit*, address the subject of regulation, as it affects both medical practice and the insurance industry. But while both books highlight many of the unavoidable consequences of both regulation and official monopolies (the only kind that can ever be maintained), none of the authors gives up on regulation and legislation as tools that will ultimately, somehow, solve the malpractice mess.

Thus Law and Polan draw the following picture of the relationship between today's medical profession and a true free market:

> The assumption of a free market for services is basic to our political and economic system. It is based on the concept that people cannot have everything they want, and the concept that no one knows what is best for individuals better than they do themselves. These principles, whatever validity they may have in the general economy, have little application to physicians' services. . . . The inherent difficulty of informed consumer choice is

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made worse by professional restrictions on the dissemination of information about alternative medical care. The medical profession closely controls the supply of medical services. For all of these reasons, the laws of supply and demand do no assure that the supply of physicians will correspond to people's needs for medical care.

The biomedical model which has corporatized medicine leaves no place to view the patient as a whole.

That's a pretty fair description of a state-endorsed monopoly, where control over new providers' entry into business is in the hands of current providers. Guinther gets more specific. In discussing foreign medical graduates (FMGs) and the role they play in allaying the apparent shortage of physicians in this country, he observes:

> The vacuum in medical services the FMGs filled was one created and maintained by American medical schools under policies established by the AMA. . . . The AMA maintains that enrollment limitation has been beneficial, that because of it the United States enjoys a "superlative medical system.". . . Competitive reasons, however, are probably dominant. The restrictive admissions policy was adopted by the AMA in the 1930s when physician income had declined precipitately due to the Depression. At that time doctors reasoned that if enrollments were held back, there'd be more patient money to go around for those already in practice, and there seemed to be no reason to abandon this attractive thesis when the post-War boom years arrived. Around that time a new economic motive evidenced itself as increasing numbers of medical students began to specialize in surgery, where their incomes would be 25–50 percent higher than in general practice. Since too many surgeons meant too small a slice of the pie for everyone, the answer was again to keep enrollments down.
>
> It was not until the federal government began handing out grants to medical schools for each student they accepted that the system was broken. As Guinther puts it, "it has been this federal bribery, not any desire on the part of American schools to produce enough doctors to meet American medical needs, that instigated the recent increase in American medical school enrollment."

Naturally, when you are dealing with a state-supported monopoly, all the incentives for quality of service and cost-effectiveness that the free market imposes perforce disappear. One consequence is that it is nearly impossible for a physician to lose his (state-granted) right to practice because of incompetence; even in states where disciplinary machinery exists, the profession has turned a short run into a steeplechase course by adding obstacles wherever possible. For example: In New York, Law and Polan note, "*nine* separate administrative reviews must be completed before a doctor's license can be revoked," and two judicial appeals are possible even after all that. "It is widely acknowledged, even in professional medical circles, that state medical boards have done a wholly inadequate job of finding and disciplining chronically incompetent physicians," they add.

Some high-ranking state and federal officials have estimated that as many as five percent of all active doctors are "definably incompetent," Guinther points out. Yet as of the beginning of 1976 "incompetence, negligence, or malpractice was a grounds for revocation or even suspension of license in only twenty-three states, so that, throughout most of the country, no matter how inept he is, a doctor has no worry that he will lose his license for those reasons, even temporarily." Not surprisingly, he adds, only some 430 doctors each year (barely one-tenth of one percent of those in practice) "receive notification *of any kind* from a state license board about the way they practice medicine, and the overwhelming majority of those communications cite the doctor for advertising his services or misprescribing narcotics, not for any negligence in his practice." Law and Polan report only 134 revocations throughout the United States in the three-year period 1973–75.

In general, malpractice insurance rates are based only on the doctor's location, specialty, and whether or not the company has paid a claim against that doctor. Since what little information that is gathered about physician incompetence is neither centralized nor readily available in any form, doctors who are at particularly high risk of malpractice cannot, as a rule, be identified by insur-

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ers. As a result, Law and Polan state,

competent and conscientious doctors, who are in the majority, must pay malpractice premiums which reflect not only their own risks but also the risks of the majority of physicians who are addicted, incompetent, or dishonest. All the evidence indicates that a small proportion of the medical profession is responsible for a very large portion of the rapidly increasing malpractice premium.

"The state-supported medical monopoly has made it nearly impossible for a physician to lose his right to practice because of incompetence."

Guinther correctly observes that hospitals have been doing at least as poor a job of quality control over medical care as have the state boards—especially important since the site of most malpractice incidents is the hospital. He quotes a 1970 HEW study on malpractice to show that although only one-third of all hospitals could have expected no claims against them that year if malpractice cases were distributed randomly, in fact *more than two-thirds* had no claims filed. Thus, a small minority of all hospitals must be doing some things very wrong indeed. This lack of control also helps to explain such astounding figures as an estimate by a House of Representatives committee that in 1974, 17 percent of the 14 million elective operations performed were unnecessary—leading to nearly 12,000 deaths. Or the report of the American College of Surgeons and the American Surgical Association that one-third of the 245 surgical deaths and half the nearly 1700 surgical complications studied were preventable.

Neither Lander nor Guinther offers proposals on alleviating this particular aspect of our national medical conundrum. Law and Polan, however, rely on the time-tested fallacy of letting the federal government take charge. Since the Joint Committee on the Accreditation of Hospitals hasn't seen to it that its member hospitals adhere to the uniform standards they profess, "we need a national, publicly accountable agency to set and apply standards for hospitals," Law and Polan declare. They blithely ignore the fact that regulation of state-supported monopolies—whether by the state or by the industry itself—has benefited only the monopolies. When the state outlaws free competition, there is little incentive left for improving the quality of one's product or service. They are on the right track when they observe that "these reforms, while of some use, will be of limited effect so long as the basic organizational structures for medical-care delivery are so rigidly hierarchical." But they fail to see that the reason the hierarchy acts as an obstacle to "reform" (in this case, improved quality) is that it is cast in the mold of the corporate state.

If the medical profession as a whole has no vested interest in improving the standard of care, who does? Is it the insurance industry, which must pay for so many preventable errors? Far from it, according to the data Guinther, Law, and Polan present—the epitome of how state "regulation" benefits only the regulated industry.

While the medical profession's regulatory agencies seem to know what's wrong with their industry, although they do little to correct it, state insurance commissions—according to the picture painted by Guinther—are easy marks for the insurance companies' confidence game. Typical suckers, they take the companies' figures as gospel and then play the game by the rules their opponents have established. The only losers, of course, are the people.

In such fields as life, health, and automobile insurance, competition acts as a barrier to such flim-flam games. But various factors have created monopoly markets for malpractice underwriters, and here such tactics thrive, Guinther reveals. A typical example is the manipulation of loss reserves. These are funds set aside against unresolved claims, so that even if a claim must be paid, the company can earn interest on the money during the two, three, or even seven years the claim is being negotiated and litigated. Because loss reserves are legally considered to be liabilities, such funds are not taxable, Guinther points out.

Hence, the more that goes into the loss reserve, the less tax the company pays. Moreover, since companies are permitted to use loss reserves for interest-earning purposes, the more that is put into them, the larger the company's source of tax-free investment capital.

Inflating the loss reserve also has another value for an insurance company. Whenever it is seeking a rate increase before a state insurance commission, it is permitted to prove its need not only in terms of actual payments to claimants, but also by the amount that has been set aside for future payments. If this figure is exaggerated, the company's claims position looks worse than it is, and it is more likely to get the change it wants than if it had presented a truthful picture. Once the rate increase is obtained, the company can then re-reserve accurately, shifting money in this fashion back into surplus.

Since insurance commissioners generally come to their jobs from the insurance industry—the old story of the industry regulating itself, even when the state is apparently doing the regulating—"some of them are not as vigilant about company practices as the public might hope." Even if they were, Guinther explains, they would have great difficulty proving the companies' figures wrong, because the commissioners just don't have the actuarial staffs to provide independent evaluations.

How much overreserving is going on? One group of Pennsylvania doctors, fighting a 200-plus percent increase in malpractice insurance rates by Argonaut Insurance, hired a private actuary to investigate. The study found that the company "had overreserved—by 100 percent—137 of 139 consecutive claims closed between May 1975 and March 1976." This exaggerated figure for projected losses had been used to substantiate the tripled insurance rates. A related practice is that of reserving losses for incidents *even before a claim is filed*. These cases arise when a doctor reports an incident to his insurance carrier because he feels a claim might occur. A study by HEW found that in some 40 percent of such cases, the injured party never makes *any* effort to seek damages. "Therefore," concludes Guinther, "to the extent that these non-asserted claims are assigned dollar values, the company doing so is showing losses on its books that it never incurs, and at the same time is showing a seriously inflated picture to the public of the actual frequency at which malpractice claims occur." One result of this practice, Law and Polan report, is that, as of 1976, "malpractice insurance profits, without considering reserves for unreported claims, had risen to 20.1 percent, as contrasted to industry-wide profits on all lines [of insurance] of 4.3 percent."

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Perhaps the most damning evidence of the complicity of insurance commissioners in this con game is presented by Law and Polan. 1975 was the prime year of the malpractice insurance crisis in the United States, with companies demanding—and getting—massive rate increases because of claimed losses. So in December of 1976 a committee of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners met to consider a report prepared by its staff on the profitability of each line of insurance in each state.

The report disclosed the explosive information that malpractice insurance, in the year of the industry's "crisis," was, on the whole, a *profitable* line for the industry. While the operating profit (which measures income from premiums and investments against losses, expenses, and taxes) for all lines of insurance had been 1 percent in 1975, for malpractice insurance it had been 9 percent. . . . Most of the state commissioners who make up the association had previously accepted the industry's position that malpractice was a losing proposition and had, accordingly, approved substantial rate increases for both 1975 and 1976. Hence, disclosure of this information could prove a source of great embarassment. . . . The committee voted not to release the report, though many state departments were then considering 1977 premium requests.

But what else can you expect when the main purpose of state regulation of insurance "has been to prevent insolvency," Law and Polan claim? "Prior approval of rates, for example, is not intended to keep premiums low, but rather to assure that companies will be able to meet all future policy obligations." But the insurance companies have gone far beyond mere solvency in setting malpractice premium rates, if the detailed calculations of income, expenses, and losses presented by Guinther are anywhere near the mark: According to his figures, in the period 1970-76 inclusive, "the *industry profits . . . reached over $1 billion* . . . or almost 30 percent on premium income compared to the 5 percent profit margin the industry itself says it tries to maintain."

If the potential for this massive hoax existed all along, why did the insurance industry wait until the mid-1970s to perpetrate it? The precipitous stock market decline of 1973-74 is the answer Guinther gives. Insurance companies routinely invested their legal reserves in the market. As long as the Dow Jones Index continued to climb during the late 1960s and early 1970s, this practice produced substantial profits in the way of capital gains and dividends. Many companies tried to "buy" business—to get more premium income they could invest—because any underwriting losses would be more than made up by market gains.

Then the bubble burst. The Dow fell from over 1,000 in 1972 to the low 800s in early 1974 to a bottom of 607 in the third quarter of that year. As Guinther relates:

In 1974 the combination of rising claims and inflation caused casualty underwriting losses estimated at $1.8 billion, a situation made desperate by the fact that the stock market losses for that year alone reached $3.3 billion. As a result, the insurers began to sell off their stock holdings for whatever they could get in an effort to achieve cash balances for their upcoming annual statements, in that way hopefully keeping stockholders unaware of the real size of the losses that were being sustained. Unfortunately for them, the largest scale selling occurred at the very bottom of the market...

It was during the year that the stock market crisis was at its worst that malpractice premium income rose from $500 million to $1 billion, and in the year following climbed another $500 million. Was there a connection? . . .

There was one malpractice insurer that didn't ask for big rate increases between 1974 and 1976. . . . The lone holdout. . . , the only company that writes only malpractice and the only company to admit it makes a profit doing so. . . , had conservative investment policies and therefore took no bath in the stock market and had no losses it had to recoup. . . . In short, the gamblers, having dissipated their money, demanded that the people who had given them the money in the first place now not only make good their losses but guarantee them a profit in the future.

"But if the state had not ordained what these doctors have been taught, the marketplace would provide quality control."

As a result, insurance commissions approved unwarranted rate increases and state legislatures changed laws to meet the insurance industry's demands. "Between 1974 and 1976," Guinther asserts, "publicity caused legislators across the land to enact laws based on false and misleading statistics, which eroded citizens' rights by responding to insurance company profit priorities and to the medical establishment's factually unfounded assertion that the only way to solve the crisis was to make it difficult for people to sue and limit the amounts of money they could win."

These authors perceive the true nature of state regulation (or self-regulation within a state-endorsed monopoly) well enough to cite the many examples given above. But somehow this doesn't stop either Guinther on the one hand or Law and Polan on the other from offering more state regulation as a solution to the malpractice mess.

Guinther is less offensive, since he also presents a few procedural suggestions that might be useful: offering both nonbinding arbitration and "free medical evaluations" in malpractice cases (both paid for with public funds, but undoubtedly saving more than court expenses would otherwise cost), and having the attorney's contingency fee added on to the jury award (so that the jury won't have to distort the award by guessing at what arrangement the plaintiff and his or her counsel may have made). But he also proposes offering malpractice insurance at the same flat rate to all doctors, written by one national company operating under federal guidelines.

Law and Polan, typical of corporate liberals, give us cures more deadly than the disease. To them, at the "heart of the malpractice problem is the fact that many patients receive care from doctors and hospitals that is well below any reasonable standard." Their "plain answer" is that "more rational controls must be exercised over who can practice medicine, where they can practice, what specialty procedures they can perform, and how they will be paid." Why do they feel such drastic strictures are necessary? Because "the incentives provided by the existing market are destructive ones. It is not reasonable to assume that professional self-regulation will run counter to these market incentives. Laws that attempt to regulate the excesses of fee-for-service medicine without addressing the root causes of the problem are likely to produce bureaucracy and regulatory red tape that are both ineffective and oppressive."

With a few small changes in wording, any libertarian

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could agree with that last explanation. Of course, Law and Polan have different "root causes" in mind than we do. Yes, it is true that many physicians place themselves above criticism—not only by their patients, but also by their peers. But this godlike posture comes not from anything inherently wrong in fee-for-service medicine itself, but rather from the fact that doctors, like judges, have been given nearly irrevocable, lifetime sinecures by the state. They are left accountable to no one but themselves. But if the state had not ordained as the one true medicine the methodology these doctors have been taught, barring all others, the marketplace would provide quality control: Our only yardstick would be the results a doctor achieved, not the fact that he had been mystically sanctioned by the state. The recent appearance of local "consumer guides" to doctors is a first step away from state-sanctioned monopoly, a trend that is bound to grow in impact.

Law and Polan offer nothing better regarding the insurance industry. They claim that

> although the malpractice "crisis" was precipitated by the actions of the insurance industry, the only legislative response on the insurance area has been to fashion immediate solutions to availability problems, rather than to address the underlying regulatory void which the crisis made apparent. Regulatory reform is absolutely essential, not merely as a response to the demonstrated excesses of a few malpractice carriers, but because the entire insurance industry has taken extreme advantage of the abysmal regulatory job done in the majority of states. . . . Some, if not all, insurance regulation must be transferred to the federal level.

Unlike Lander, who can accurately describe an elephant but doesn't seem to know the *word* "elephant," Law and Polan give us a slightly distorted view of the same elephant and then call it rhinoceros. Although they have carefully shown how regulation, for medicine and insurance, is controlled from within the industry and benefits only the industry itself, they fail to understand that this condition *necessarily* follows from all imposed regulation, under any guise. And *that* is the malady of which the malpractice crisis is only one symptom among thousands.

Former LR executive editor Marshall E. Schwartz, has been a medical writer for both the *San Francisco Chronicle* and Planned Parenthood, Inc.

Readings from a Christian genie

JOANN ROTHBARD

The Joyful Christian *by C.S. Lewis. Macmillan, 235 pp., $7.95.*

IN THESE DAYS OF Moonies and Hare Krishnas it is rare to find an intelligent religious work, and in these times of charismatics, both Catholic and Protestant, it is uncommon to find an intelligent Christian. C.S. Lewis, who died fifteen years ago, was certainly a Christian and definitely intelligent. And not only that: He was sensible and wrote beautifully.

C.S. Lewis was a scholar. He taught Medieval and Renaissance English literature for thirty years at Oxford, and then became a Professor at Cambridge University for the last nine years of his life. Beside the several works he wrote in this field, he was a prolific writer in other areas: theology, children's books and science fiction. Strangely there are people who are fans of one kind of his writing and unaware of the rest. *The Chronicles of Narnia* are seven books for children. *The Space Trilogy,* of course, is three books of science fiction. Probably his most well known religious book is *The Screwtape Letters,* letters from an old devil to a neophyte devil on how to woo Christians from their belief.

The Joyful Christian is not a book written by Lewis, but a compilation (by William Griffin) of 127 readings of Lewis, from 17 books. The selections are short; typically about two pages, but a few are longer or as short as half a page. They are arranged by topic, with all of the pieces on miracles in one section, all the pieces on prayer in another. Even if one has read some of the books from which this assortment is taken, it is useful, because of the careful selection and arrangement. There is also a bibliography of Lewis's works in the back of the book.

"Joyful" is an appropriate word to use in any book of C.S. Lewis, for the word "joy" was important in his life. When Lewis was a child he first experienced "joy", a a feeling of longing for he-knew-not-what: *Sehnsucht.* Joy was not something he could summon up; it came rarely and unexpectedly. During his teenage years, when he was an atheist, he associated joy with a feeling for Norse mythology and for the music that Wagner composed for the "Ring of the Nibelungen", based on that mythology. Finally, in his early thirties, when Lewis was converted to theism and then Christianity, he found joy lodged in religion. He called his autobiography *Surprised by Joy.* In his late middle age, he married a woman named Joy, who died shortly thereafter.

One often hears from atheists that Jesus may not have been the Son of God, but was certainly a wise man, like Buddha and Mohammed, whose moral teachings the world should heed for its own good. Lewis, on the other hand, points out many instances of Jesus's saying things such as: "I am the Anointed, the Son of the uncreated God, and you shall see Me appearing at the end of all history as the judge of the Universe," or "I am begotten of the One God, before Abraham was, I am." Lewis concludes from this:

> On the one side, clear, definite moral teaching. On the other, claims which, if not true, are those of a megalomaniac, compared with whom Hitler was the most sane and humble of men. There is no halfway house and there is no parallel in other religions. If you had gone to Buddha and asked him, "Are you the son of Brahma?" he would have said, "My son, you are still in the vale of illusion." If you had gone to Socrates and asked, "Are you Zeus?" he would have laughed at you. If you had gone to Mohammed and asked, "Are you Allah?", he would first have rent his clothes and then cut your head off. If you had asked Confucius, "Are you Heaven?" I think he would probably have replied, "Remarks which are not in accordance with nature are in bad taste." The idea of a great moral teacher saying what Christ said is out of the question. In my opinion, the only person who can say that sort of thing is either God or a complete lunatic . . .
>
> We may note in passing that He was never regarded as a mere moral teacher. He did not produce that effect on any of the people who actually met Him. He produced mainly three effects—Hatred-Terror-Adoration. There was no trace of people expressing mild approval.

Lewis also gave short shrift to Christians who profess the faith but stick at the Virgin Birth. "I can understand the man who denies miracles altogether, but what is one to make of people who will believe in other miracles and 'draw the line' at the Virgin Birth? . . . In reality the Miracle is no less, and no more, surprising than any others." He considers that God had his hand in every conception of man and of animals, and in this case, He took off his glove, so to speak.

Lewis has a similar view of other miracles of fertility, such as the conversion of water into wine, and the miracles of the loaves and fishes. God makes all wine from water, but "Once, and in one year only, God, now

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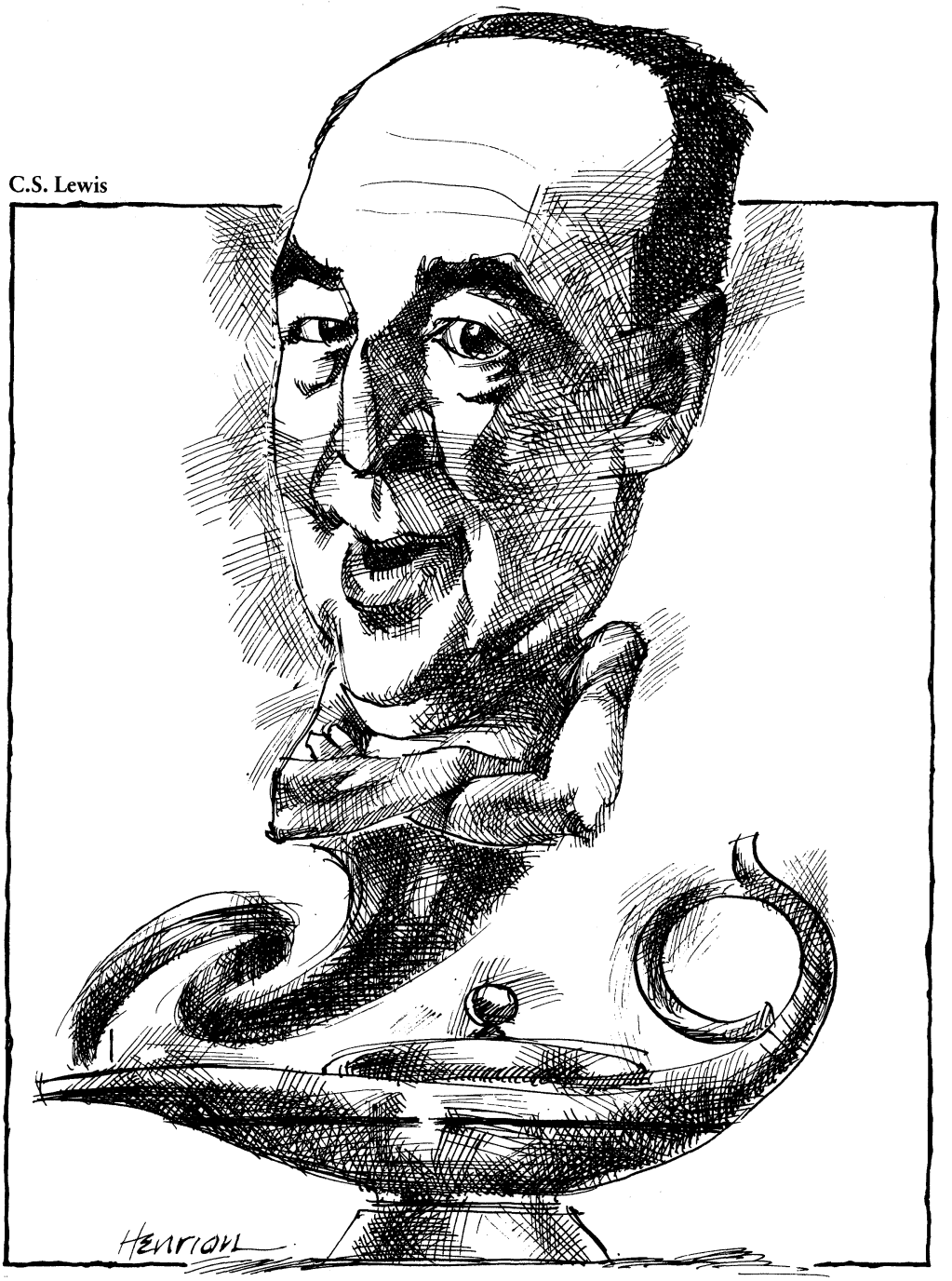
incarnate, short-circuits the process: makes wine in a moment."

Lewis also infuses secular matters with a Christian view. In one piece he writes: "The state exists simply to promote and to protect the ordinary happiness of human beings in this life. A husband and wife chatting over a fire, a couple of friends having a game of darts in a pub, a man reading a book in his own room or digging in his own garden—that is what the State is there for. And unless they are helping to increase and prolong and protect such moments, all the laws, parliaments, armies, courts, police, economics, etc. are simply a waste of time." On patriotism, he writes:

I once ventured to say to an old clergyman who was voicing this sort of patriotism, [that one's own nation is superior to all others] "But sir, aren't we told that *every* people thinks its own men the bravest and its own women the fairest in the world?" He replied with total gravity—he could not have been graver if he had been saying the Creed at the alter—"Yes, but in England it's true." To be sure this conviction had not made my friend (God rest his soul) a villain; only an extremely lovable old ass. It can however produce asses that kick and bite. On the lunatic fringe it may shade off into that popular Racialism, which Christianity and science equally forbid.

C.S. Lewis



Because some of the books from which these selections are taken were collections of letters or of radio talks, they treat many popular topics such as sex: "Banish play and laughter from the bed of love and you let in a false goddess . . . The mass of the people are perfectly right in their conviction that Venus is a partly comic spirit. We are under no obligation at all to sing all our love duets in the throbbing, world-without-end, heartbreaking manner of Tristan and Isolde; let us often sing like Papageno and Papagena instead." In writing about sex in Heaven, he makes the analogy to a small boy "who, on being told that the sexual act was the highest bodily pleasure, should ask whether you ate chocolates at the same time. On receiving the answer 'No,' he might regard the absence of chocolates as the chief characteristic of sexuality. In vain would you tell him that the reason why lovers in their carnal raptures don't bother about chocolates is that they have something better to think of." The boy knows chocolates; he doesn't understand sex. We know sex, we don't understand heaven.

Lewis's fields were literature, theology and philosophy. When he ventured into the social sciences (not often) he sometimes faltered, such as in his contention that the economics in a fully Christian society would be socialistic. In writing about money, he admits to being out of his depth. He calls for a Christian economist to solve the problem of investment—forbidden by the Old Testament and the Fathers of the Church, but now the basis of our whole economic system.

Lewis was a member of the Church of England, a high member who confessed weekly and believed in purgatory. Libertarians may find the idea of an established Church grotesque, but Lewis never mentioned denominations in his books—he based his faith on the Bible, and was popular with Catholics and many Protestants.

Have you ever met someone who seemed so wise and knowledgeable that you wished you could keep him with you always, like a genie in a bottle, to answer any questions as you thought of them? Well, genies seem to have gone out with Aladdin, but this book is a good substitute: traditional Christian answers in C.S. Lewis's wise and witty style. ❑

JoAnn Rothbard writes frequently for LR.

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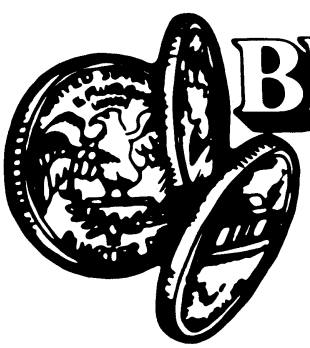

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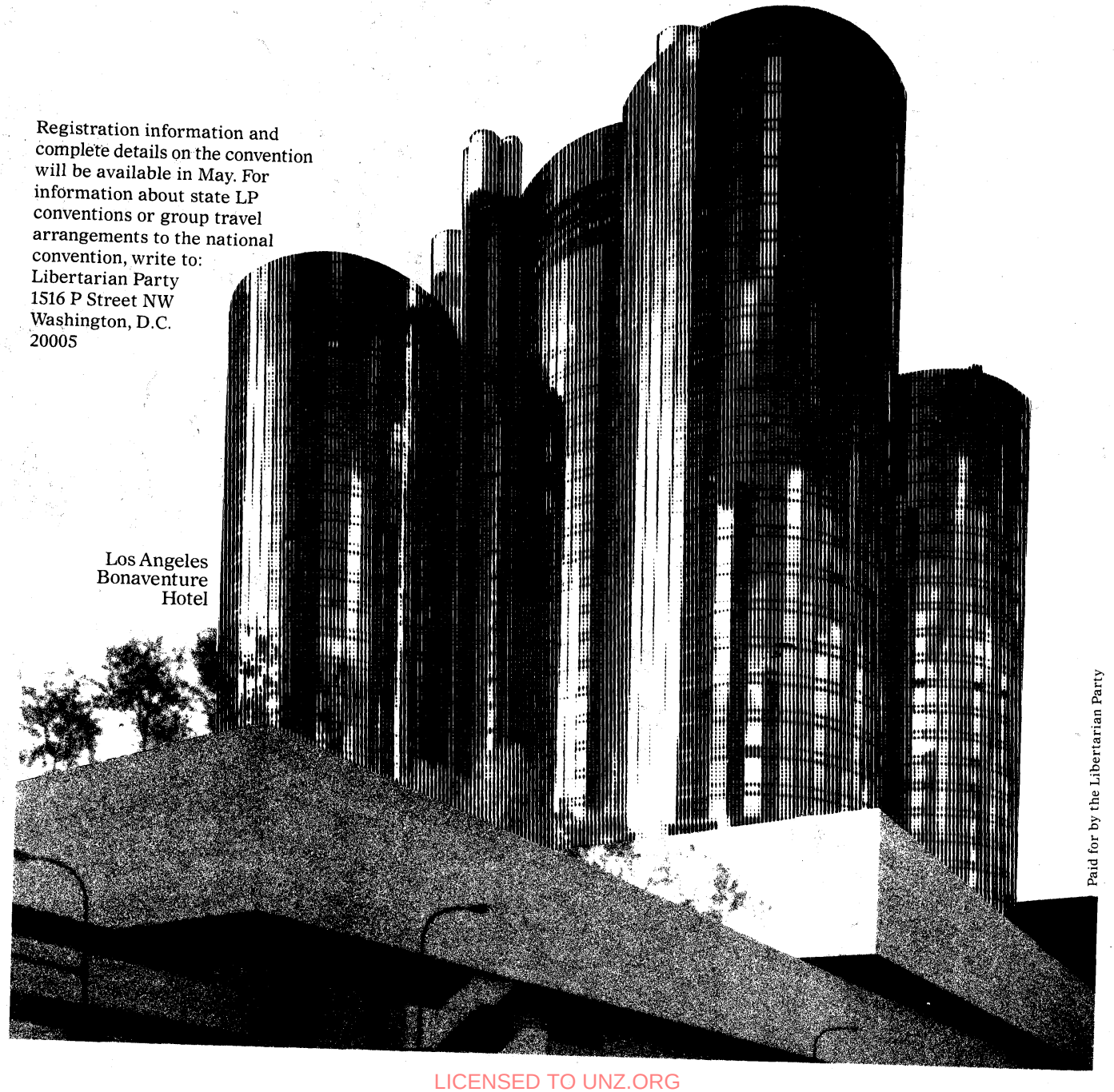

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